USING SELF DIRECTED LEARNING TO DEVELOP THE CHURCH'S LEARNING COMMUNITY TO BECOME COMPREHENSIVELY EDUCATED, EQUIPPED AND EMPOWERED TO EVANGELIZE

James W. Wilcox

B.M. emphasis in Media, Norfolk State University, 1993
M.A., Norfolk State University, 1995

Mentor
Felix D. Burrows Sr., D.Min.
Kent L. Poindexter, D.Min.

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ABSTRACT

USING SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING TO DEVELOP THE CHURCH'S LEARNING COMMUNITY TO BECOME COMPREHENSIVELY EDUCATED, EQUIPPED AND EMPOWERED TO EVANGELIZE

by

James W. Wilcox, Jr.

United Theological Seminary, 2008

Mentor

Felix D. Burrows Sr., D. Min.

Kent L. Poindexter, D. Min.

This project addressed the lack of self-directed learning in Christian Education at Ammons United Methodist Church, Cincinnati, OH. Implementing self-directed learning is expected to produce educated, equipped and empowered people that will evangelize. The methodologies used to achieve these goals were pre-test, post-test, focus groups, interviews and qualitative research. The project consisted of five ninety-minute Bible classes. The participants researched and taught in four subject areas. At the conclusion of the five-weeks, the participants had increased in learning, taught others and brought other to church. This model is useful for teaching self-directed learning.

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DEDICATION

To my loving mother the late Lula Mae Wilcox who encouraged me and loved me unconditionally. Lula Mae made me go to church and participate in church activities and told me I would like it. She was and is my inspiration. Thank you "Mama."

INTRODUCTION

Chapter One of this study focuses on the calling and purpose of this ministry. The chapter focuses on the necessity for this ministry in our present society. This chapter details the writer's journey into empowerment and how self-directed learning helped him accomplish this task. This chapter also focuses on the writer's community and church.

Chapter Two discusses how research literature supports this ministry model. Personal observation has made it clear that self-directed learning was not widely practiced by some members of Ammons United Methodist Church. Once the members become aware of the advantages of self-directed learning and began to implement this process, the fear slowly subsided and the members were open to researching and gaining knowledge for themselves and the church community.

Chapter Two also answers critical questions that may arise from using the self-directed learning process. Since self-directed learning is not widely used in most churches and public educational institutions, this chapter will help the reader understand the benefit of self-directed learning.

Chapter Three explains the theological, biblical and historical foundations for ministry focus. In Chapter Three, the writer will explore how Liberation Theology and self-directed learning are complimentary and are vital elements to uplift people from despair and bring them to a place of hope. Also in Chapter Three, the writer will link biblical foundations to self-directed learning.

Chapter Three will give an historical account of two individuals who were successful during their era by utilizing self-directed learning.

Chapter Four describes the methodology and design of the model that was used in the field experience. Chapter Five summarizes what occurred during the implementation of the project and explains the relevance of the data collected, in addition to evaluating and analyzing the results of the model. Chapter Six is a reflection, summary and conclusion of the ministry focus

CHAPTER ONE

Practice of Ministry

Like many Southern African-Americans from the South, James was raised in the church. In many of these churches, auxiliaries played a huge role. One auxiliary that played a power role in James' life was the Mother's Board. When James was a young child, he vividly remembered his mother telling him about Mrs. Mosella. Just like an African storyteller recalling history, she explained to him how Mrs. Mosella prophesized that he would become a preacher. Mrs. Mosella was a mother at Zion Orthodox Primitive Baptist Church. During his college years, James would frequently visit Mrs. Mosella. At the ripe old age of eighty, she was a strong, proud woman. She would often tell James stories about her family and how she could plow the fields in her hometown in Georgia as she spit tobacco with pin point accuracy in her tin cup. Mrs. Mosella loved the Lord very much and she was always praying and seeking God. James' mother had so much respect for her and the word she spoke. If Mrs. Mosella said James was called to preach, then his mother accepted her at her word. Unfortunately, James did not see it that way. His plans were to sing and play the piano. He was not going near the pulpit.

Zion Orthodox Primitive Baptist Church was the church James attended from birth until his sophomore year of college. Old Zion, as some people called it, was an extremely traditional church. The auxiliaries were highly visible. The Mother's Board and the Deacon's Board were the most visible auxiliaries in the church. James can fondly remember how he would sit with the Mother's Board.

He thought he had died and gone to Heaven. James' mother, along with Mother Robinson, Mother Dyson, Mother Annie Bell Smith, Mother Jones, Mother Fisher, Mother Novella Richardson, Mother Christmas and Mother Pessie Mae Duboise, also know as "Carolina Red," spoiled him. James would get money and candy, not to mention great places to sleep. It also placed him near the music. Mother Walker was the musician for the church and James would always watch her. James used to tell himself, he was going to play for a choir one day. The mothers would always sit on the right hand side of the pulpit.

James also remembered the deacons on the left hand side of the church. They looked like prison guards waiting for someone to escape. Most of them never smiled and the only time James found himself in that area was for behavioral issues. If a parent had a hard to handle child, they would send them to the left, the deacons. As you may have noticed, James did not state any of the deacon's names. He will mention two deacons that he greatly respected. Deacon Freddy Fisher and Deacon Willie Daniels are deacons that he remembered because they were highly skilled in the area of prayer. These men prayed so hard and with great intensity that James believed if they wanted God to send rain, all they would have to do is pray.

James' pastor, Reverend P.L. Jones, Jr., was very unusual. Pastor Jones was a high school drop out. When God called him to preach, he knew he had to finish high school and obtain G.E.D. With the grace of God, he accomplished the task. Pastor Jones was a very tall and soft spoken man. He had a country accent and at times he did not speak correctly. Nevertheless, he was a man of power and respect.

Even though Zion Orthodox was traditional in worship, the church was advanced when it came to business, church construction and positioning in the East Coast Florida Primitive Baptist Convention. Zion Orthodox had more people who obtained graduate degrees than any other church in the city. Pastor Jones would rely heavily on these people for sound business advice. This strategy paid off.

Zion Orthodox purchased another church in 1976 and renovated it within two years. The church Zion purchased had occupancy of four hundred and fifty. After the renovation, the church could seat 1, 200 comfortably. Also, Zion sold the other church within a matter of months. Elder Jones did not stop at the sanctuary renovations. He encouraged the church to raise money to buy the entire city block adjacent to the church's property. Just like soldiers following a confident general, the church purchased the property. Under Pastor Jones the church broke ground for a dining facility and an educational wing. The last major project was having a modern, lighted parking lot. The vacant city block became one of the largest parking lots in the city. When Pastor Jones asked for it, it happened. When he wanted to burn the church mortgage within four years or less, the church did it in three years. To this day, all of the projects are paid off and the church has minimal debt.

When Pastor Jones wanted to be the Moderator for the East Coast Primitive Baptist Convention, he made his request known. He was the moderator for almost seven years straight! A man with a G.E.D. and no seminary training was over a group of over 135 churches. Where he lacked in formal education, he made up in savvy and wisdom.

In the midst of this ever growing church was my family. James' sisters were in the choir and his mother was over the Mother's Board and president over Choir Number One. James' mother was also on the Matrons and Pastor's Aide Committee. His father was diligent in sending the family to church, but he would not give his life to Christ until years later. At an early age, James was a Junior Superintendent, choir director and Youth Sunday School teacher.

At some point in time, James became the president of the East Coast Primitive Baptist Convention Youth. At Zion Orthodox, they trained youth to work in the church at early ages. James began to work in the church when he was eight years old. During this time, he was playing for the Sunday School Services. Around age 12, James became a Junior Superintendent for the youth Sunday School Department. His duties were to make sure Sunday School Services started on time and he was in charge of the Sunday school review. He also had the responsibility to make sure the church members did not run over the allotted time given to them for Sunday school. James was in charge of ringing the bell as well. This was his first leadership role and it taught him a great deal of responsibility. James also played and directed the youth choir at Zion Orthodox. This proved to be difficult at times because the adults would interfere with the music process. These individuals did not know how to play an instrument, but they would dictate how James should play a certain piece.

He remembered an adult at church who made him feel lower than gum on a shoe in church choir rehearsal. James and the adult argued about words to a song. It escalated to the point where James just walked away in tears. From then on out, he promised himself never to let an incident like that happen again.

It was six years before he played at a church again and it would be very different from the first time. He refused to put up with anyone's foolishness. James became a tough no-nonsense choir director. Zion Orthodox was not a place for the weak if you were going to be in leadership. Even as a child, James noticed if you had a talent and your parents had a position in the church, you had a ticket to do almost anything you wanted to within reason.

If you were poor and your family did not have much, it was a much different plight. The people of "Zion" were very conscience of material things. It seemed perfectly ok with James at the time, but at "Zion", they would print the names of people and how much money they gave to the church during assessments. People would look at those figures and judge people by how much or how little they gave.

Even though my pastor had highly educated people working with him, James truly believed he had some insecurity about having these people in every aspect of the church. Therefore, he gave positions or approved position for people who did not have college education. James' mother had only finished high school, but she was a faithful worker and held the position as head mother over the Zion Orthodox Mother's Board. Pastor Jones wanted to make sure there was an equal balance of power. Just like an institute of higher learning, James was groomed at his church. He was taught how to conduct a church service and meetings.

He knew how to lead devotion and teach a Sunday school class. James obtained these skills before leaving eighth grade. He is happy to say his first church prepared him for college and taught him excellent life skills. Unfortunately, this would not be enough to keep James at Zion Orthodox Primitive Baptist Church.

When James was in leadership at "Zion", he was blinded by the system of the church. Since he was brought up in that church, he could not see its ritualistic nature. During a college break, James sat in the audience and saw a disturbing picture. Everything at his church was done by rote. Nothing was original about worship service. The first thing he noticed was the choir singing songs that had been sung during his tenure at the old facility. Zion Orthodox moved from that church in 1976, and now in 1988, they were still singing the same songs.

The deacons were still lining out hymns and after the hymns they would pray. The hymns were not the problem; however, trying to listen to them while people were still singing proved to be more difficult. Nevertheless, "Zion" had been doing this for years because of tradition. Since leaving "Zion" for college and going to other churches, James became accustomed to hearing the prayers. He wanted to know what was being said. The invitation to discipleship really took him in for a loop. Joining the church and following the rules and regulations seemed to make one saved. Then baptism meant one was sealed. People would talk to the pastor and then turn to the church and tell them why they were joining. The pastor would then ask do you believe in Jesus and that he died for your sins? That was the entire procedure. No one every asked did you repent from your sins? No one ever asked do you know what salvation means? They just joined the church and became baptized. That was all you really needed.

James looked at some of the people and realized they had not changed spiritually since 1976. Tradition kept them in "spiritual suspension". The pastor still took the text and talked about something totally different than the text. Afterwards, he would beckon for the organist to play some background music because he felt "his help" coming. As soon as the musicians hit the first note, once sleeping or bored people in the pew, would perk up and shout back at the preacher. If one would have asked them what the preacher was talking about before the music, they would have not been able to respond. Why did these people act in such a manner? Tradition!

James remembered when Pastor [redacted] first arrived at Zion Orthodox. The year was 1976. He was in the first grade when Pastor [redacted] arrived. James warmly remembered the days when Sister [redacted] would watch him after school while his mother worked. During the beginning of Pastor [redacted] tenure, James' mother and his family were extremely close to Pastor [redacted] Pastor [redacted] was a very humble, country preacher. Since Pastor [redacted] had a down to earth demeanor, the church membership quickly expanded. Pastor [redacted] was a regular visitor at James' house and he was always in the neighborhood. When he would go visit the hospitals, he would visit the sick from all denominations. After being pastor at Zion Orthodox for six years, the church continued to grow during Reverend [redacted] administration and we had to move to a new location. Instead of taking the church out of the community, Elder [redacted] decided to relocate to another larger church two miles from the old facility. When Zion moved to the new church location, everyone was ecstatic and the church services were even livelier than before.

Things were running smoothly for some time. With a new church, comes the arrival of new people and because of the influx of new members the church had to expand its current facilities. This was an aggressive project, but just like a coach leading a championship team, the people were motivated and labored to reach the goal set by Elder [redacted]

The church was renovated and completed ahead of schedule. Pastor [redacted] just had a way with people. After the renovations were completed, James noticed a change in Elder [redacted] His visits to James' home decreased. The church purchased a new parsonage in, during that time, an upscale area.

The rituals and traditions of the church remained in tact, but Pastor [redacted] views and attitude would drastically change. James lost respect for his pastor when he became controlling and manipulative. Just like a wolf defending his territory, he forbade his members to visit other churches because everything they needed could be found at Zion Orthodox. In retrospect, James truly realized how insecure this man had become. When Pastor [redacted] verbally attacked James' mother, it was like him shooting James in the heart at point blank range. As James mentioned earlier, his mother was the head of the mother's board at the church. She had been a member of Zion Orthodox long before Pastor [redacted] arrived.

His mother was open to all forms of Protestant Christianity. She was especially fascinated with the Pentecostal Movement. She started attending a tent revival conducted by Evangelist L.S. Phillips. Evangelist Philips was of Caribbean descent and would come to Cocoa, Florida twice a year. He would preach and minister to people that were often overlooked by the mainstream churches.

James witnessed this man laying hands on the sick and they would recover. Drug addicts and prostitutes would come to his revivals. People from the mainstream churches would sneak over to see Evangelist Phillips. James figured that was his mother's downfall. She boldly went to the meetings. Evangelist Phillip's wife and son were skillful organists and like a fresh breeze of air in a stale room, was his daughter's beautiful singing voice.

The people who attended the tent revivals loved the teaching and the powerful prayers of this man. Just like heat spreading through a frying pan, the word quickly spread around town about the revival and the miracles that were taking place during this influential crusade. Finally, the news made its way to the pastors in the City of Cocoa.

Just like the Pharisees responded to Jesus, most pastors in the city were not pleased with Evangelist Phillips and his tent revival. Pastors began speaking out against Evangelist Phillips and telling their church members to discontinue their attendance. James could not understand why they would do this to such a man. He only came to the area twice a year. To this day, James will never forget how Pastor [redacted] preached about his members going to the tent revival. He mocked the people saying they were rolling in the dirt and acting foolishly. Immediately after service, he confronted James' mother and told her she had a membership at Zion Orthodox and if she wanted to go attend the tent meetings, she could take her membership and join at the tent. With an arrogant tone, he told her if she continued to attend the tent services, she could no longer serve as a mother of the church.

Looking him firmly in his eyes and not blinking once, James' mother in defiance, told him she was a mother way before she joined the church and her salvation was not tied up in a title. Two days after that dreadful conversation, his mother resigned from the Mother's Board and all other auxiliaries she so faithfully served. Soon after she resigned, word spread about why his mother resigned. She was treated like she had a disease. Those who were my mother's friends associated with her were not afraid of retaliation from Elder [redacted]. It was hard to believe some of the same people who claimed to be friends of James' mother, would not even speak to her at church.

Instead of his mother retreating like a coward, she stayed at Zion Orthodox and continued to go to the tent revivals. At this point, James became angry at Pastor [redacted] and his church. He felt his family was betrayed. However, many people would go through the same hurt James' family endured. Pastor [redacted] had no problem demoting people in the church. If an individual with a position in the church disagreed with Pastor [redacted], at the following church conference that person would not be reinstated and the successor would be announced at the conference. If Pastor [redacted] felt someone was a threat to his administration, he would give them fewer responsibilities and communicate to them through other members. If he felt one was too educated, he would say," Some people think they are more than they are since they have a little education." He was notorious for preaching about people or events that were a threat.

While James' mother was going through her storm, James' storm was not too far off in the distance. James thought his darkest days at Zion Orthodox started when a youth minister made numerous attempts to violate him. Some people tend to look at feminine men and think they are a menace and overly sexual. However, James has learned through his experiences, the men who go through great lengths to hide sexual addiction are the greatest predators. This young man was well respected and had a steady girlfriend. Even with all of this, he made James' life stressful with his unwanted advances. If that wasn't enough, James' next door neighbor's niece made advances at him. James felt so trapped. His parents and the next door neighbors were like family. James did not want to be the cause of them not being friends. Also, he knew his father would kill both of the individuals who violated him. James did not want his father to go to jail.

During all of these events, James stayed in church. It was his only escape. He did not question God, but he asked Jesus for help. James' mother was going through her storm with church leadership, but James knew God was keeping her strong. She could have left Zion Orthodox much sooner, but she stayed because the family had been raised in this church.

Our family and friends attended this church. In fact, many of them are still there. James did not want to burden his mother with his problems when she had enough of her own. James thought he had made all of these things happen. Suddenly, he became obsessed with not failing. He was determined not to let these people make him a statistic. James knew he had to be strong. It is ironic that the youth pastor passed away and the young lady is strung out on drugs.

James had no ill will towards the two people who violated him. He just forgave them. He figured they had suffered enough. He just wanted to get on with his life. This situation made James a stronger person.

Finally, James was graduating from high school and he was happy this phase of his life was over. He was still in leadership at Zion Orthodox, but he was wounded because of what his mother had to endure.

While he was in high school, and up until the time he graduated, James would secretly visit Saint John's Church of God in Christ. He did this much to the disdain of church leadership. He remembered one day he was coming back from Saint John's and [redacted] caught him. She was James' Sunday school teacher. With a disappointed look she said, "Zion is your home and you don't need to go to that other church. They don't believe like we do." It seemed as if James had hurt her by going to St. John's.

Nevertheless, he continued to go to St. John's. Excitement and energy are just a few words to describe the services at St. John's. People actually stood up and testified! They talked about the delivering power of Jesus and being filled with the Holy Ghost. Mrs. [redacted] was right. Even though the two churches where Christian churches, the language and the terminology was much different. At St. John's they were laying hands on people and praying for healing. Members and leaders had never done this at Zion Orthodox. James remembered a particular Sunday when he had a chance to attended services at St. John's. This old mother came up to the microphone during testimony services and started to sing, "I need more power." The church chanted after her, "Power Lord." They sang this song so hard and with so much fervor until people started shouting and falling out.

Like firemen racing to a four alarm blaze, ushers were busy scrambling for sheets to cover the women who fell out. The Spirit was so high in the place that the organist was slain in the Spirit and just flopped down on the organ face first. That really sent the "Saints" up a notch in the praise service. They quickly removed him and another organist just slid in and played like nothing had happened.

The pastor of St. John's during this time was Reverend E.C. Taylor. He was an exceptional teacher and administrator. This man had such a remarkable testimony. The doctors diagnosed Elder Taylor with cancer and gave him less than two months to live. Elder Taylor had faith in God and God's divine healing. He started pleading the blood of Jesus over his diagnosis and health. Elder Taylor lived until his late seventies. This powerful man of God wanted James to come to St. John's and join.

Even though he had a convincing argument for James coming over to St. John's, the soul ties at Zion Orthodox were too strong, but Elder Taylor was the first person in church leadership to usher James into the Pentecostal Movement. James will always be grateful.

James' high school days had ended and now he had the difficult task of finding a college. James did not want to be in his hometown, but he did not want to leave the State of Florida. Also, he wanted to be in a major city. Florida Memorial College seemed like the best choice. The college was in Miami, Florida and James liked the fact the college was a Baptist related institution. He really wanted to be in a religious environment. Unfortunately, James did not feel as close to God as he should when he was in high school. At Zion Orthodox it was about rituals, not relationship. One did things because it seemed religious.

James grew up not knowing if he was saved. James will never forget when he joined a singing group in his hometown. Most of the people in the singing group attended the same Pentecostal church. They appeared to be so religious. They would always ask James if he was saved. James would tell them he had been baptized and was a member of a church. This line of questioning was offensive to James. He thought they were being arrogant. The group members would quote scriptures like scholars. James had basic knowledge of the bible, but they really knew the Word of God. So after graduation, he matriculated to Florida Memorial College with his limited knowledge of the bible. Florida Memorial College was bustling with energy when James arrived. People came from all over the country and the Caribbean to attend this college.

During the week of registration, some students planned an impromptu worship service. James guessed they had a clue some would need it after going through the grueling task of registration. At this service, he would meet Lily Green and Warren Johnson. These two individuals played a significant role in his life. Elder Taylor and Evangelist Phillips laid a foundation, but Lily and Warren laid the frame work for James' spiritual growth. Lily was from Freeport and Warren was from Eluthra in the Bahamas. Lily Green was a colorful character and she was a bold soldier for the Lord. She would rebuke anything and anyone that would hinder her from doing the work of the Lord.

She was the black version of the "Saturday Night Live Church Lady" character. Holiness was her standard and she did not waste any time to correct people who were in error. Believe it or not, she was brought up in an Anglican church. She was a tongue speaking, hand clapping, ring-shouting fanatic for Jesus.

Everyone on campus knew Lily. Not only was Lily Green an excellent witness of the Lord, she was an outstanding student. Lily would spend much of her time in the Susie C. Holley Chapel. Warren Johnson was a 6'6, two hundred and forty pound gentle giant with a distinctive word of wisdom. He too was a superb student. Warren, being very soft spoken and gentle, balanced the energetic and outspoken personality of Lily Green.

Patrice, Dandrea and Tony were a few other close friends that James had while at Florida Memorial College. As a matter of fact, Dandrea still calls him from time to time. She is an intense prayer warrior. Speaking of prayer, the group would pray often in the chapel. If memory serves James correct, the group put him in charge of prayer service. James though he would bring his Primitive Baptist style to the prayer service. James lifted his hands for the group to stand during the song they were singing.

As the song was closing, James then motioned for them to sit, as he went to his knees to pray. The group looked bewilder. The group was used to singing and having a praise and worship session. After the praise and worship, they would start the prayer service. During his tenure at Florida Memorial College, James began to realize how tough it was to break the habit of tradition. It was not easy to break tradition when ones church was adamant about one keeping them. "Zion" was a church that invested heavily in its youth. While in college, they sent care packages and church newsletters. They paid for books and sent letters of encouragement. Because of these acts of kindness, James felt obligated to them and the denomination. They even went as far as to send him a listing of Primitive Baptist churches to attend in Miami. Caving in to the pressure, James found himself attending Mt. Olive Primitive Baptist Church in Miami. The pastor is Elder Frazier Arnold.

James found it ironic that the pastor of this church lived close to the college. Pastor Arnold and his wife were very kind to James. Pastor Arnold's wife would do James' laundry and when Pastor Arnold thought James may have needed a car, he was going to fix his old car to let James have a vehicle in which he could travel. These people were sincere and loving. They accepted James like a son.

James remembered playing for the youth choir of the church. One day he was sitting in the choir stand and saying to himself, "This is Zion Orthodox in Miami." He knew his stay at Mt. Olive would be fleeting. One evening Lily and Warren called a prayer meeting. It seemed like a normal service, but they taught on the receiving of the Holy Ghost. James was not afraid or disturbed by the topic because he had been exposed to Elder Phillip's and St. John's Church of God in Christ's church services.

They always talked about the Holy Ghost. Lily and Warren, like grade school teachers getting a class prepared for a major test, carefully explained the aspects of the Holy Ghost and how to receive the Spirit. After the bible study, they went into prayer service. They began to pray for all the group members. James thought it was going to be a typical prayer service. However, this would not be the case. As soon as Lily and Warren began to pray for him, he felt a warm sensation come over him. James really though he was getting sick. He had never, in all his years of going to church, felt like this during prayer. He tried to shake it off, but he continued to get warmer and warmer. Warren then instructed him to start praising God. James did as he was instructed. Like a roller coaster at an amusement park, his tongue was in a world of its own. James was speaking things that he had no earthy ideal what he was saying and no one prompted him to say them.

The language just flowed like a raging river. James could not stop. At that moment it seemed time stood still. All James could do was speak in tongues and cry. James spoke so much that his stomach was aching. The service was over and he was still speaking in tongues. A few of the brothers had to take him back to his dorm. They sat with him for five hours and all he did was speak in tongues. Before coming into the room, James had a huge audience. People were looking at him as if he was a parade float. They would ask the brothers helping him, "What's wrong with him"? They would say, "God is dealing with him." At one point, James felt like he was a new exhibit at the zoo. People would stop by his room just to see what was going on. James' best friend thought he was mad. James was so happy this happened on the weekend because he would not have made it to class. James could not stop the tongues. It felt good and James felt so light and free. Finally on Sunday, James came down from his high.

He was so drained and empty and he slept all day Sunday. James was out of it. When he awoke that evening, he washed and came out refreshed. James knew things would be different. He would drop some habits and some people. James knew that Holiness would be the order of the day for him. It was a week before he made any drastic changes. When the week was over, James told Pastor Arnold that he would no longer be playing for his church and James left Zion Orthodox Primitive Baptist Church. This took immense courage. James had attended this church for over twenty years. He told his mother and father what had taken place. James told them God had led him to leave "Zion" and go to Cooper's Temple Church of God in Christ. Not long after he made his announcement, James' mother left Zion and became a member of St. John's Church of God in Christ.

Cooper's Temple was a family church. James genuinely loved the service. It reminded him of St. John's service. The Pastor and his wife were terrific with college students. They had three children close to his age range. James' friends Mark and William joined Cooper's at the same time he did and they bonded because of this. James remembers Pastor Cooper and his wife going on a fast for a month. They would only drink liquids. They were a couple of faith. Marc was the oldest of the three children and he could play the organ like nobody's business. Pastor Cooper told James the church did not have a musician so he prayed and laid hand on Marc Within a year, Marc was playing the keyboard. Cooper's Temple was what James needed. Not only did he feel like the church was his family, the pastor and his wife took the time to advise him about God and school. Pastor Lenwood and First Lady Mildred would take the crew along with them almost everywhere.

One Sunday evening we went to Community Church of God in Christ in Pompano Beach, Florida. The pastor of this church was Pastor Cooper's cousin. First, James knew something was odd when the ushers were serving red punch during the service. James had never seen that before. When the usher made her way to him, he declined. Jim Jones just kept coming to his mind. James told himself, if everyone dies, he was going to live to tell the story. After that odd episode, Cooper's Temple Choir took the choir loft. The choir loft was so elevated; James thought he was going to get a nose bleed.

When the choir finished the climb, two selections were rendered. The songs were well received and besides the Kool-Aid being passed out during the service, James thought it was going quite well.

After Pastor Cooper's sermon, the choir rendered another selection and the ministers gave the invitation for discipleship. James thought the service would be over and everyone would go home. This would not be the case. The next part of the services was even more bizarre than the Kool-Aid being passed out. Pastor Cooper's cousin said he would like to honor and recognize a special member. He talked about how the young lady made the program possible and how tirelessly she worked in the church.

He had talked about this woman's deeds for fifteen minutes. A few of the choir members and James had spotted this beautiful golden foil in the corner and they assumed the honoree was going to get some roses for her contribution. That's was they thought! The pastor of the church said sister we know we can not pay you, but we would like to give you a token of our appreciation. The pastor picked up this well wrapped bouquet of uncut collared greens. "Collared Greens"! The choir yelled all together.

No sooner than James could turn around, the choir in unison just fell on the floor laughing hysterically. Well, if that was not enough, the woman started shouting and crying before the Lord. She told the pastor she had a testimony about what just took place. At this point, James was rolling his eyes and saying to himself, it could not be more, please. She told the congregation that God told her to go to Winn Dixie Supermarket and purchase some ox tails and some fat. She told us she did not know why God told her to do this but she was obedient. Then she said, "Ox tail, fat, collard greens, collard greens, fat, ox tail." Looking really deep and mysterious, she said, "Saints, God has brought this thing full circle. " At that, the choir just lay down and laughed.

She was really serious. James had never seen anything like this. Driving back to Miami with Pastor Cooper, the group laughed until they arrived in Miami. James thought it took a good two weeks to get all of the laughter out of everyone's system. It was funny.

Even thought James remembered good times at Cooper's Temple he remembers many difficult times as well. Mark was pledging to be in a fraternity during this time. Williams, the other friend, was the person in charge of the men pledging this particular fraternity. Mark was excited about this and had mentioned this to Pastor Cooper. Pastor Cooper, being a product of a black college, was jubilant as well.

The jubilation soon turned into anger and disgust. Mark had been badly beaten by some members of the fraternity. When James saw Mark, he noticed he could not stand up straight. Mark would not tell him what happened. After some probing questions, he finally told James he was beaten by some fraternity members. However, Mark told James they were going to buy a back brace for him. All of a sudden, James just saw red. He explained to Mark they were trying to buy him off with the back brace.

James shook his head and told Mark, he must tell someone in authority what took place. Then James asked, "Where was William during this beating"? Mark's eyes welled up with tears. He just shook his head. At that point, James knew William had to know what was going on. James made it his business to find William. James told William he saw Mark and he was not doing well. James asked William did he know anything about situation. Like a scared deer caught in head lights, William said, "No." James then told William his fraternity did not supersede his Christian relationship with his brother.

After speaking to William, James went to Pastor Cooper's house and told him what happened. Pastor Cooper was very disturbed and almost began to cry when James told him. James was extremely angry at William for protecting his fraternity brothers. Pastor Cooper came out to the dorm to see Mark. Mark was in pain, but tried to play it off as if he was ok. Pastor Cooper told Mark that he needed to report this. Mark told Pastor Cooper he would. Then Pastor Cooper set out to find William. The same story William told James, he told Pastor Cooper. He said he did not know about this. Mark did tell some authorities and completed the process, but he was shunned and not treated like the rest of his fraternity brothers. Mark felt rejected and did not wear or display his fraternity paraphernalia.

While James was in college at Norfolk State University, he received cards from Mark. Mark would write James and tell James how he was doing. One day James received a Christmas card from Mark. This would be the last card James would receive. Mark died of the injuries caused by his beating. This was five years after James left Florida Memorial College. James had to tell Pastor Cooper the news. Pastor Cooper was devastated. It was if Pastor Cooper had lost his own child.

The Cooper's really loved the group and James felt it. Cooper's Temple remains close to James' heart. Unfortunately, while James was in graduate school at Norfolk State University, Pastor Lenwood died. Sister Mildred took over as pastor and not long after, she died. James is glad to report Marc Cooper is the pastor and the church is one of the fastest growing in Miami. James is proud of Marc. The odd were stacked against him, but he came though victorious.

James was in a Holiness church and his attitude towards sin changed. Going to church and serving in leadership was not enough for him, but living righteous and victorious was his goal. Lily, Warren and Pastor Cooper groomed him. James read the Word of God for understanding and guidance. He had to examine his stay at Florida Memorial College. Sure, it was Baptist related on paper and the Baptist of South Florida would have major functions at the college, not to mention the school's Religion and Theology Department was popular, but if one took those things away, the school would look like a state institution of higher learning.

James remembered when he attended the first choir rehearsal for the gospel choir at Florida Memorial College. He was expecting a spiritual event. Instead, James heard the choir president tell the members if they cursed in choir practice they would be fined a dollar. She told the choir she had already contributed seventy-five dollars. When she said that, James knew immediately this choir was not for him. James talked to a few of his friends and they decided to start a singing group on campus. The group was very successful and had singing engagements around campus and the city. A little less than a month, the gospel choir's director, along with two male choir members, stopped James on his way to lunch. James knew of the choir director.

James was aware that he was one of the student ministers in the Bachelors of Theology program. Besides that, James really did not know him. What he said to James made his blood boil. If James was still Primitive Baptist, the two of them would have been fighting. The director accused James of causing strife by starting a new campus choir. Like a self righteous Pharisee, he told James he should examine his Christian walk. This young man told James he was evil and could not be trusted.

After the director and his cronies looked James over, he told James he was not welcomed back into the gospel choir. James looked at him and told him from the first rehearsal, he was out. Then James thanked him for confirming what God had already told him. This hit James like a ball out of left field. James had never spoken to this guy before this event. James truly believed if he was not grounded in the Word of God, a fist fight would have ensued and secondly, the director's ugly words may have killed him spiritually. However, James just waved his hands before the Lord and counted it all joy.

James was growing in grace and knowledge at Florida Memorial College. Lily and Warren delegated responsibilities and shared leadership. All of a sudden, it became odd to James that he would always get stuck playing the keyboard or singing. One day James had to tell Lily playing and singing were his gifts, but not his calling. She looked startled, but James was serious. He was not going to be limited by what others though he should be doing. After the third semester at Florida Memorial College, James knew it was time to say goodbye. He told himself it was hard to minister to people who knew the truth, but still did not do right. James wanted to go further in Jesus, but the people at the college, with the exception of a few, were satisfied with going to church on Sunday and going to happy hour during the week.

The small Intervarsity Fellowship he was in was considered radical. This school was still steeped in tradition of its denomination. James decided to leave Florida Memorial College and transfer to Norfolk State University. This was a major step of faith for him. He did not get support from his family and his brothers and sisters in Christ told him he would not make it at a large university. Some of the faculty and staff did not believe he was going. They thought James was just bluffing.

Ms. Ella Grant was a counselor at Florida Memorial. She had lived in Brevard County, Florida and made sure James was taken care of at Florida Memorial. She had taken him in like he was her own child. She was disappointed when he told her he was leaving. However, James knew God was telling him to go.

He prayed one day and told the Lord to give him confirmation about his choice to move. He received this confirmation from Professor Jones in the Music and Fine Arts Department. James was talking to him about his decision and how people were telling him he would not make it at a larger university and he would be another number in the crowd. Professor Jones told James he needed to leave Florida Memorial College. With a serious, stern look, he told James his potential was going to be wasted and unrecognized at Florida Memorial College.

Professor Jones explained to James that people can not tell anyone about an experience if they had not experienced it themselves. James knew at that moment God placed this man in his path. Professor Jones had his confirmation. When God confirmed His word through Professor Jones, the enemy immediately began to bring fear and doubt. James applied to Norfolk State University during the spring term for January and heard nothing from the admissions department.

When his letter of acceptance finally arrived, the spring term had already begun. James felt as if he made a huge mistake at first. He enrolled at Brevard Community College so he would not fall behind in his studies. Also, this would allow him to transfer credits to Norfolk State University. At this time, James was not really thrilled with his academic arrangement. Some people at the college were not encouraging either.

A guidance counselor at Brevard Community College approached James and told him, if he kept changing schools, he would never finish college. His statement made James angry and James was even more determined to get to Norfolk State. After successfully completing classes at the community college, James matriculated to Norfolk State. Even though Canaan was promised to him, there were giants in the land that had to be conquered. James and his mother drove to Norfolk State University during the city's worst snow storm. However, the storm was a minor inconvenience. James was just happy to fulfill God's destiny for his life. The campus was so nice and clean. It looked like the buildings were placed in a park like setting. James was very impressed with the buildings and grounds. After meeting with the admissions counselors and the Music Department chair, James paid his fees for the dorm and moved in. His mother gave him money and she talked to him about keeping the Lord first in his life. It was a long lecture. Afterwards, she hugged him and waved goodbye. James was resting in the dorm and finally, he felt he was in the place God wanted him. A week after registration was complete, all hell broke loose!

James received an official letter from the Financial Aid Department of Norfolk State. The letter said if he did not have eight thousand dollars by the end of the week, he would have to vacate the dorm and leave the campus. It felt like his world was closing in. James remembered calling Ms. Grant crying and telling her he may be coming back to Florida Memorial College. Ms. Grant told him he was always welcome back.

As soon as James hung up the phone, God asked him, "Why was he going back to Egypt"? The Lord reminded James of the confirmation He sent and reminded James that faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

At that point, something in his spirit leaped and he went back to his room ready for spiritual warfare. James knew this event would take him to the next level on his spiritual journey.

James had three roommates that shared a small dorm. Their names were Rob, Jamal and Bud. Jamal was slightly nerdy and wanted to fit in. He was also the dorm comedian. Rob came from a tough background in Baltimore and had to work extremely hard to pay for college. Last, but not least, was James' roommate name Bud. Bud was a football player from Coconut Creek, Florida and Bud was very arrogant and self centered, not to mention very loud. As God would have it, none of James' roommates were saved and they did not have their money either. God was up to something. James had strong expectations of the impossible taking place in his life to be a light for his roommates.

When James arrived to his dorm room after a day of talking with financial aid officers, he took his travel chest, along with a quilt, and made an altar where he would pray and seek instruction from God. When his roommates saw this, they thought James was crazy. James remembered going to the altar and praying day and night. His roommates would laugh and make fun of him, but it did not bother James in the least.

He was sold out for Jesus and he had a pit bull grip on the prize. For example, the Lord directed him to see Dr. Carl Harris, the Music Department Head. James calmly told Dr. Harris of his pending situation. Dr. Harris listened very attentively and then told James there was nothing he could do.

Just before Dr. Harris could pull out his chair, James stood up at his desk and told him, "God had sent him to Norfolk State University to be in this department." Firmly James told him, "He had purpose for being at Norfolk State and it will be fulfilled this day"!

James told him, "He would tie himself to a tree and call every news network before he went home." James let him know that he was saved, sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost and he refused to take down for the devil. James stared Dr. Harris straight in the eye and without blinking once and told him, "God was going to use him, to allow James to stay." After that show of boldness, Dr Harris eyes expanded so wide James though they were going to explode. He started to stutter and told James some way he would find some money for him. James wished God's blessings upon his life and walked out the door. Dr. Harris' secretary, Mrs. Randolph, thought James was out of his mind. As James was leaving, she just looked at him with her mouth open. James was crazy. He was crazy enough to believe God for a miracle. James wanted people at the college to know he meant what he said. James wanted them to know that God was with him.

James just had raw, never say die, faith. Faith to James was fully anticipating it, whatever you needed it to be, to happen. James was still reading the Word of God as well as, meditating about what he read. James was praying every time he had a chance. James started anointing his head with oil so much, that he began to smell like a salad. However, he knew he had to do whatever it took to get a breakthrough.

The more James went forth in prayer, the louder the roommates laughed. Then people from Florida Memorial College started to call wondering when he was coming back to attend. James told many of them he was coming back when he graduated from Norfolk State. Well, Saturday came and James had not one red cent. However, he knew God had made a way. James prayed himself into a higher level of faith. James had no doubt that God was going to make away.

After praying again, he glanced at the clock. James was aware the financial aid counselor told him his money was due by 12:15p.m. When he looked at the clock, it was 11:45a.m.

With no time to spare, James started singing praise songs. Bud cursed and told James to shut up. Not long afterward, he just got fed up and left the room. James was so glad he was not moved by Bud's actions. Five minutes into his praise session, he received a call. The call was from James' oldest sister. She explained to him that mom told her about his dire situations in Virginia. She told him that mom and dad really wanted to help with the schooling, but they had to take care of the two youngest siblings. James told her he understood and he knew God was going to come through. Well, after a few minutes of talking to his sister, she told him to quickly go to the Western Union and pick up the ten thousand dollars she had sent. In a calm manner, James said, "Ok." James thanked his sister about seven times and then she told him to get off the phone and get the money. When James hung the receiver up, he went forth in some serious Holy dancing and praise. James was so loud that all of his roommates, who still did not have their money, ran into the room.

They wanted to know what was wrong. James told them it is not what is wrong, but rather what is right! James had their undivided attention and right there in the dorm he had testimony service. The same people who were laughing at James a couple of days ago, now saw the salvation of the Almighty God. No sooner than he finished the testimony, they started asking him to pray for them. James told them he would. Without a second to spare, he picked up his briefcase and ran down the street to the Western Union. Every person James saw on the way to the Western Union heard about his testimony.

James finally arrived at the Western Union and gave the young lady at the counter his information. James started testifying about what had happened to him. She told James she had some sickness in her family. James prayed for her right there at the booth. After the prayer, he quickly told her he needed his money to enroll for school. James knew she was in the Spirit, but she had to come down from the mountain to give him his money. The sister was so caught up after the prayer, James think she had forgotten she was at the Western Union. James put the large bills into his briefcase and ran down the street to the student union building. He was still telling people about his miracle. In record speed, James reached the payment area. As the cashier was taking his money, James was telling her about what God had done. She just rolled her big eyes and started counting the money. James just kept talking about what God had done. After the transaction was finished, he gave a dignified hallelujah and blessed the cashier. Her actions did not faze him one bit. James' bill was paid in full.

Rapidly running through the student union building, he saw two young women heading up the stairs. James took a moment to stop and tell them his testimony. Tasha [redacted] and Daneen [redacted] were their names. They were sold-out, born again believers like James.

In a matter of minutes, they started having church on the steps. Daneen was Charismatic; she did not shout; however, she just hopped all over the student union. Tasha was down right Pentecostal and she dance like she was on the "Soul Train" line for Jesus. People were just looking in amazement. Tasha and Daneen told James they too were having trouble with their financial aid. They told James they were going to receive his testimony by faith to receive their money.

James told them he was in agreement with them. They touch and agreed and went their separate way. James was on fire and he did not care who knew it. That evening he saw Tasha and Daneen in the cafeteria. They came running to him like two kids finding ten dollars on the street. "Praise Him brother," they shouted. James shouted back, "Glory be to God"! Daneen and Tasha told him God blessed them with eight-hundred dollars each to remain in school. When they told him this, James got a quickening in his spirit and went forth. Daneen became excited again and started hopping all over the cafeteria, while Tasha just lifted holy hands and started crying. People in the cafeteria looked at them as if they were aliens from another planet. Some people who knew the name of Jesus heard the commotion and came over to investigate.

After getting the information, they went forth. Revival just swept through the cafeteria. Even some of the workers came over to get a little heat from the Holy Ghost fire. James had never seen anything like it before.

Little did he know, Daneen was an officer in Praise Fellowship Campus Ministries. After our praise session in the cafeteria, Daneen invited him to one of the meetings. The meeting was on a Wednesday and James was excited about going. He thought the people would be worldlier on a state university campus.

James thought because he went to a private Baptist college he would be more advanced. Well, he went to one of the meetings and became hooked. James did not expect so many Christians on a state university campus. Praise Fellowship reminded him of the fellowship at Florida Memorial College, but there were more Christians in number at Norfolk State. These Christians were more vocal and visible.

They were interested in social change in conjunction with spiritual change. They were serious about biblical research and they had connections with large mega churches. Norfolk State University had many Christians, but they had other religions and sects that were very vocal on campus as well. These other groups made us sharper and bolder. Praise Fellowship was just like a large family.

James was an officer and head musician in the group. He enjoyed this Christian fellowship because he was use to preaching and teaching, as well as playing the keyboard. He wasn't put in a box in this ministry. Praise Fellowship strived for excellence. Scotty [redacted] was the group leader and he was a first-rate preacher. Daneen was the group teacher. They complimented each other very well. Academics were central to the members of fellowship and maintaining right relationships were as equally important. We came up with a way to minister to people through small prayer cards. The prayer card asked a few simple questions. First, it asked for a name; however, that was optional.

Then it asked for ones prayer request and if one was a born again believer. If the individual was not a believer, the question would be, would he or she like to receive Jesus in his or her life or would he or she like Jesus to come back in his or her life? Then the individual could put in his or her e-mail address or phone number, if they so desired. Many people would take the cards and fill them out.

This was so popular on campus Praise Fellowship continued to run out of prayer cards. Many people would place the names of people they were praying for on the cards. The group had cards of students who were not believers, but wanted us to pray for sick loved ones. At the group's prayer meetings, they would have over 75 cards.

They would begin individual pray at seven o'clock p.m. After the individual praying, they would pray for the needs of the ministry. The most important part of the prayer service was getting to the prayer cards. Scotty would pull out a card and read it. The information on the card, dictated how the group would pray. If a person was not a believer, they started out praying for his or her salvation and afterwards the group followed up with the prayer request. James loved this way of praying. It seemed so orderly and it felt as if they were accomplishing something. Scotty would always call on a person to pray for a particular card along with follow up prayers from other members. The prayers were effective. After every prayer meeting, people started to get answers concerning his or her particular situation. They would find us in class and thank us. Many people started coming to the prayer meetings and more gave his or her life to the Lord. Praise Fellowship used to call the pray meetings "Prayer with a purpose."

One night the group went to Rock Church's twenty-four hour prayer room. This room was in the dome of the church and it had booths where one could pray. It was dimly lit with a huge flame like structure that lighted the room. The prayer room was more like a prayer cathedral. It was very large. Well, the group started praying. To be honest, they had nothing to do that night and they knew that the prayer room would be open. That was the night they got drunk in the Spirit.

The group was just praying and praising God. In a matter of minutes, James was just laughing and smiling. He did not do drugs and nothing was really funny. Daneen was laid out on the floor crying and "Big" Angie was sleep. When James tried to get up, he had to hold on to the wall. James could not walk.

He felt so good. James felt if God had never visited him again, he did enough in college. James was so open to the move of God and he is a better person for it.The people in Praise Fellowship knew how to have fun and they were not so deep that they could not laugh or joke. During this time, James attended New Community Church of God in Christ. At this assembly, the church mother, Mother Charletta Thomas, was an important component of the church. Mother Thomas was a power communicator and financial expert. She handled the church's finances. James heard this powerful woman of God speak on the radio and he knew he had to attend this church. Bishop Thomas was a wise and down to earth man. He was very solemn and he was a traditional Pentecostal preacher. Chris Thomas was the second to the oldest son and the church organist and choir director. He was a barrel of laughs, but was a serious musician. At first, the church was exciting. It reminded James of Cooper's Temple. Mother would do the exhorting and the choir would skillfully sing.

The Bishop would line out his text and preach. When the radio ministry would take place, things became more like a studio show than a church service and that would wear on James. He had to feel like clapping and did not like the fact he had to clap on cue. The service during the radio broadcast seemed extremely mechanical. James told himself he would balance New Community Fellowship service with the Praise Fellowship Service.

This worked for a while and he threw himself into campus ministry. His faith was built up at Norfolk State until people on campus started calling him "The Bishop." Mrs. Randolph, Dr. Harris' secretary, started calling James this. James told her he was a servant. She rolled her eyes at him and turned to her word processor to type a letter for him. Mrs. Randolph looked out for James. She and Dr. Harris kept him in check. On the campus of Norfolk State, if one told people he or she was saved, one had to live it. People were always watching and waiting for Christians to slip up. James will always remember when two football players ran down to his room. They told him about this guy reading palms and telling the future by tarot cards. The football players ran down to get James to investigate what was going on. Without hesitating, James told them he was not interested. When they left, James started to think back to Florida Memorial College. The group was praying for a young lady and all of a sudden she began to heave forward as if someone was pushing her. The young lady received Christ in her life, but there were areas she needed deliverance in. The group interceded for hours with her. The women took her back to the dorm where they could continue praying for her. No sooner than James opened the door to his room, Dandrea called him.

She told James when they arrived to the dorm, they asked Mrs. T, who looked like she could be Mr. T's aunt, to assist them in the prayer effort. Mrs. T was gifted in the area of deliverance. All of a sudden, Dandrea was telling James the young lady was spitting up green matter. Then James heard Mrs. T tell the women, "If you are not a praying, sold out believer, you need to leave the room now"! Dandrea, who sounded like she was reporting a crime in progress, told James the young lady was levitating.

All James heard in the background were people pleading the blood of Jesus and rebuking the devil. James knew Dandrea never seen anything like this. He could hear the surprise and excitement in her voice. Without notice, Dandrea told James she had to go. James started to pray after he hung up with her.

The next day the young lady's mother came all the way from Guadeloupe to retrieve her daughter. When the young lady told her mom she was a Christian, her mother became angry and took her out of the college. The group later found out the lady's mother was a priestess in Santateria, which is a type of Voodoo cult. So when the football players came to James' door a third time, he decided to go upstairs and investigate. James prayed for God's covering and pleaded the blood of Jesus over himself. As James walked into the room, he saw these two-hundred and fifty pound men looking as if they had seen a ghost. James, without even needing help, spotted the young man they called "Sweet Chucks." When James locked eyes with him he said, "Your Sweet Chucks"? Then James told him because of his mischief, he had been interrupted from his study time. The guy looked at James like he was ready to run. Then James said, "Satan the blood of Jesus is against you"! James laid hand on him and Sweet Chucks became nervous and started to squirm.

He started sweating so much that James had to get a napkin to wipe his hands afterwards. The football players sat quietly and watched. After James finished, He told the gentleman Jesus is all powerful and James canceled the enemy's evil assignment in Sweet Chucks life. James then told him to leave the room, James was a bold soldier. He opened the door and left. The Holy Spirit directed James to have one of the football players to open the door. He told them that the gentleman was still at the door. Sure enough, he was at the door listening.

James then told the gentleman if he continued to use witchcraft, he would have to leave Norfolk State University. James told him God would honor the stated request. James told him to get right and chose Jesus. Sweet Chucks quickly ran down the hall. After this episode, James turn to the football players and told them if they did not give their lives to Christ and study the Word of God, they would always be slaves to the devil. The next week, Sweet Chucks left Norfolk State University. The football players came back to tell James. God's supports his children.

It became apparent to them that day. James told the football players, "If God did not say it, he will not say it. When James tells you, believe God for it". Meanwhile, at New Community, things did not get better or worse, they just remained the same. James was getting tired of the same routine. He found himself visiting other assemblies.

One day a sister in Praise Fellowship suggested that he go to Faith Deliverance Christian Center and check out Pastor Amos. James was elated in how she described the church and the services. She convinced him and James decided to join her one Sunday. As they walked into the sanctuary, they were greeted by happy, smiling people. James felt as if he were a celebrity.

They found a seat for them and while they sat, beautiful music played over the loud speakers. As the music volume was lowered, the organ played soft music while a young man gave the congregation a stirring and most encouraging word of inspiration. This was different and really awakened his interests. The well rehearsed and effective praise and worship team had the people on their feet.

As the praises went forth, the church officers came into the sanctuary. James saw men and women in this line of officers. However, he noticed a woman in the back of the line. James glanced and thought nothing of it. Then the same woman who brought up the rear of the line made her way to the pulpit and announced she was Pastor Barbara [redacted]. James heart sank. He had never seen a woman in the pulpit preaching.

James then became upset and he wanted to walk out. James had been raised in an area where women did not preach nor did they have leadership over men in the church. Even though James wanted to leave, he did not want to be rude to the young woman who brought him to the church. James decided to stay. He was glad he made the right decision.

That day, James entire spiritual life changed. He remembers it like it was yesterday. He was sitting on the south side of the church. Pastor [redacted] wore a red blouse, a blue jean skirt and tan sandals. She took her text from the entire first chapter of Jonah and read Jonah the second chapter and the first verse. The words she spoke that day changed James' life and to this day, greatly influenced the way James ministers today. Pastor Amos taught and preached with clarity and purpose. To this day James can remember what she spoke about and the important points she made about Jonah.

First, she explained when one disobeys God, he or she has no other choice but to go down. Then she told the congregation there is a price one must pay for disobedience. She told them Jonah ran from God and went down to Tarshish and paid a fee to get on the ship. Then she told them the Holy Bible makes it clear that God sent the storm. Just like skilled lawayer stating a claim, she said, "God will send a storm of perfection, or a storm of correction and in Jonah's case, it was of correction." She made a point to focus on the men throwing out their wares to stop the ship from sinking.

Then she told us, "Sometime we are throwing out things we really need. We throw off people we really need while we allow Jonah to stay in the ship'. It continued like this until the last verse. James was so humbled. Out of those quick thirty-minutes she preached and taught, James had nine pages of notes.

He was so enlighten. How she taught was so profound, that people would jump and shout off the teaching. There wasn't any need for music, they had it, but if they didn't play music, the people would still rejoice. This was just good word. After hearing this dynamic pastor, James knew he had to become a part of this ministry. Gender did not matter, the Word of God did.

Before James made a commitment to start attending this assembly, he went to the morning, evening and a few mid-week services. Everything was consistent. After thinking long and hard about the move, James finally told the New Community family his intent to join Faith Deliverance Christian Center. It was not well received by some. Some even questioned Pastor [redacted] sexuality. It did not deter James in the least. All James was concerned about was being fed. He learned a great deal from this ministry.

At one point, he became angry at Pastor [redacted]. James wanted to know why he did not teach the members of "Zion" these truths. Why did he not set up other ministries to help and draw people to Jesus? God's answer to James was, "People can not take you where they have not been." After God gave James that answer his anger turned to pity. James really felt sorry for the people at his first church. They were missing out, but they would have to come to the place where they wanted change.

James had been attending Faith Deliverance Christian Center for three months and he was riding high. James was going forth with power and spreading the Word of God with boldness. However, James had to change his approach to ministering to people. Even though James told people the truth, he did it without mercy. Sometimes one can be merciful without telling the truth, or one can tell the truth without mercy.

God was showing James he needed to do both. Even though God was using him and people were coming to the Lord, James needed much improvement in the area of mercy. Finally the time had come; it was time to graduate from college. Tasha, Daneen and James were all graduating with honors. God just took James back to their first meeting. By faith, they made it. Graduation was very emotional. James just sat there and reflected on God's faithfulness to him.

James cried when he was handed his degree. Praise Fellowship had a function for all the graduates. They gave God all the glory and encouraged the "Saints" who were still in college to be a witness in there academic performance. Soon after graduating from Norfolk State University, James would go to a small state university in Kansas. James attended Pittsburg State University. James really did not care for the college. It was in a rural town that wasn't diverse.

A month before James traveled to Kansas he went through the Church of God and Christ Directory and got in touch with Pastor [redacted] He was a pastor in the area James was to travel. He was excited that James called. His son Anthony was attending the school and they could room together. James sent his money for the deposit and he was on his way to Kansas. At first, it seemed like everything fell into place. James was student teaching and playing for the college and church's gospel choir.

As time moved forward, things started to fall apart. The pastor's wife became overly demanding. James noticed the church was a tradition Pentecostal church. They did not like how James dressed, nor did they appreciate the fact that he came from a church were a woman was the pastor. Also, they did not like the fact that the church was called a "center".

Things became worse when a few people the church offended gave their life to the Lord after James ministered to them. The pastor preached on this subject the following Sunday and tried to discredit the new convert's salvation. He told the people James' methods were not sound. If that was not bad enough, his son was not paying the rent. He was not even paying the bills. One day James came home to find the water had been turned off. That day he sat in his room until his roommate returned home. James had already arranged to stay at a friend's home. James' roommate had to use the restroom in a hurry that day. Like a freight train hitting a building, he opened the door with full force and quickly made his way to the restroom. After a few minutes, James listened to him unroll the toilet paper and try to flush the toilet. There was no water; therefore, the toilet did not flush. He tried again. The toilet did not flush. It was evident what he had done after he came out of the bathroom.

He knocked on James' bedroom door and opened it. He asked James, "What happened to the water?" James told him, "You have to pay the bill to keep it on." Then with disgust, James left the house. The next day James went to the landlord's house. James found out his roommate had not paid rent in three months. James showed the landlord his cancelled checks. After she had seen the evidence, she knew what was going on.

James took the matter to the young man's father. His father was outraged by his son's reckless behavior. Pastor [redacted] was very harsh and direct with his son. He was so harsh James began to feel sorry for him. However, after that meeting, Pastor [redacted] and James' relationship went from bad to worse. James was led to leave Pastor [redacted]'s church. James was taken in by the District Superintendent, Elder Watson. Elder Watson saw something in James and allowed him to teach bible study and lead prayer at his church in Parsons, Kansas. Elder Watson was a progressive man. At first, James did not know how to take him. He had a hairstyle like James Brown and he loved to watch other people shout. He would watch in amusement. Nevertheless, God showed James he could not look on the outside because He knew the heart. Elder Watson and his wife, Dr. Watson took him in like a son. James saw what he learned at Faith Deliverance Christian Center being put to action at Elder Watson's church. Even though James did not care to be in Pittsburg, James knew God was shaping him.

James had people to encourage him. Elder Fauntelroy of Ft. Scott and Bishop McDonald in Kansas City, Kansas were also there for James. One Sunday morning, two of James' good friends traveled to Bishop McDonald's church in Kansas City. After the church service, dinner was being served.

By mistake, James bumped into a lady as he was going into the dinning hall. She found James and told him that he had a roommate that was causing strife. She told James that the roommate would be leaving. She gave James a bottle of olive oil and told him to anoint every door post in the house. James was truly amazed because he did not know the woman, nor did his two friends know her. They just looked at each other.

All James did was bump into her. James did what the woman of God told him to do. Within three days, Anthony told James he had found another place and moved out. When the semester ended, James knew his season was over in Kansas. James just felt stronger in the Lord after his stay in Kansas.

James return to Norfolk State University and completed his Masters Degree. A week before graduation, James received a knock at his door. James was a Resident Assistant in the dorm and dealt with people on a constant basis. It was a student athlete and he was very anxious to talk to James. James had known this guy since he matriculated to Norfolk State. He was always respectful to him and they even worked out a few times. Like an electrical storm out of a clear blue day, he asked James what he would think if he liked men and women. James looked at him for a few second because he was surprised he was even talking about this subject. Being very slow to speak, James told him he did not agree with the lifestyle because of his religious beliefs, but he would still respect him and respect his privacy. James told him he had friends who drank and smoked; nevertheless, they were still his friends. He just did not drink and smoke. James just mentioned to him that he should tell his girlfriend so she could make a decision to stay with him or to leave. James told him it was not fair for him to make a choice for her. He received James advice and agreed with him.

James moved back home and attended New Hope Church of Deliverance in West Cocoa, Florida. Mother [redacted] was the pastor and James had many young adult friends who attended her church. The service was not what he had come accustomed to, but he was happy to serve. By this time, by faith, James landed a job at the community college. God directed him to see the President of the college and talk to him about what he had done in college and how he wanted to share what he learned in the community. James told him he was offered a job at his alma mater, but he wanted to be home. The president of the college offered him a job at the college. In less than a day, James was starting his new job. God had always given him" job faith".

During this time, God was calling James to run a revival. He was excited. James told the people at the church and he told a good friend of his, Pastor Enoch Allen. Pastor Allen was so excited about what God had told James, he agreed to play the music at the revival. Kenneth [redacted], who was a neighbor at one time, agreed to play his guitar. He too was a member of Mother [redacted]'s church. James told Kenneth to check the church schedule to see if the church had plans. The calendar was clear and James told him it was ok to play.

Kamie [redacted], James' best friend, had agreed to play the drums. It wasn't easy, but she agreed. James insisted she play. God told him to ask her. Little did he know, Kamie had gone through a storm in her life. Everything was set. James had the place, the musicians and now all he needed were singers for worship service. James asked three young ladies if they would like to be a part of the revival. Without hesitation all of them said yes. James told them he had Pastor Allen playing the keyboards and Kenneth [redacted] playing the guitar. Also, he told them Sister Kamie would be playing the drums.

Immediately James saw their faces drop. One sister tried to tell him something about Sister Kamie. Like a fireman putting out a small fire quickly, James stopped her and told her that God told him she was to play the drums.

That settled the conversation. Service started promptly at seven o'clock that night. Pastor Allen invited his congregation. Friends and family also attended the revival. Unfortunately, Mother [redacted] did not attend the revival. Only two people from James' church showed up. The praise and worship was excellent and the people really participated in the service. The Holy Spirit was in the auditorium. God gave James a word of hope for the people that night. After the sermon, God led him to prayer.

God was using him in the area of prophesy that night. James is not a prophet, but he was being used to do that particular work. James would pray for people according to what God was showing him. The service was effective. People were getting the help they needed. Then James, along with Pastor Allen, prayed for Kamie. Sister Kamie was crying before the Lord. God was truly dealing with her. All of a sudden, Sister Kamie started going forth in praise. She was still crying. It was if she was being set free. Later on Kamie told me how she had backslidden. James thought the revival played a part in helping place Kamie on the road to victory.

If he had let the sisters talk to him about Sister Kamie, he might have changed his mind. James is glad God gave him the boldness to refuse to hear what she was going to say. James is proud of Sister Kamie. She has a powerful deliverance ministry and is a co-owner of a successful beauty salon. Pastor Allen ordained her to pastor. To God be the glory. Who knew there would be a time that Kamie would have to pray and rescue James.

James left Mother [redacted]'s church soon after the revival. She was upset Kenneth had played for the revival. She thought James should have asked her. James told her Kenneth checked the church calendar and there was not a conflict. James told her he asked Kenneth if he could play for the revival.

Even after explaining all of this, she was still upset. The same woman who did not come to one of the three nights of revival was upset because a church musician played for the revival. After some prayer and meditation, James joined Pastor Allen's congregation. This man was not even James' pastor, but supported James during the whole revival without complaining. James joined Community Fellowship Church the next Sunday.

He was a member at Community Fellowship for four years until God called him away to a new job. Community Fellowship was a caring congregation. The church had some of the best musicians, singers, evangelist and preachers. Pastor Allen was a skilled teacher and his life was and is an exemplary example.

James was a musician and evangelist at the church. Pastor Allen and James were in charge of a community choir outside of our church. Praise Fellowship Mass Choir was the name. When James came to the choir, there were only eight people attending choir rehearsals. All he wanted to do in the choir was simply sing. Not even an hour into the choir rehearsal, Pastor Allen asked James to teach two songs. James taught the choir the songs and thought that would be it. Pastor Allen was so pleased with the results that asked James to take charge and be the musical director for the choir. The choir that started with eight people within months became thirty people. At one point, the choir increased to forty-five people.

The choir was anointed and they would always receive their blessings during choir rehearsal. James remembers rehearsing "Stand." The choir rehearsed the song and when they were finished people began to cry, others were shouting. Some people had fallen out under the power of God. The song spoke to the spirit man.

Midway through James' tenure as choir director, he was hired at Strang Communications. They publish Charisma Magazine, New Man Magazine, Ministries Today Magazine and Vida Christiana Magazine. They also had a book publishing division called Creation House. James was the Conference Coordinator for Strang. This job really exposed him to many ministries. James would travel the country going to mega-churches and large church conferences.

Mr. and Mrs. Strang were major supporters to James. James would accompany Mr. Strang to some events to sing. God gave James favor with them. James saw how to operate a ministry well and he saw the dangers of not having a well thought out ministry. He really had a chance to see the business of ministry while working at Strang. After meeting many of the top ministers and musicians, James realized they too were human and had many shortcomings. James is glad he follows Jesus and not people. Joy and Steven Strang gave him the opportunity to dream. They started off as a small magazine company. Now they have over 320,000 people subscribing to Charisma and that is just one of many magazines they own.

During the time of the choir's popularity, James' name went through a smear campaign. He went to get a haircut at a salon. The stylist who cut his hair had a questionable past.It did not matter to James because he just needed a haircut. At this time, James' grandmother was sick and he took a leave of absence from Strang and took a job closer to home. James was working in an area far from his regular barber and this person was right down the street. Someone in the church told Pastor Allen that James was visiting this questionable barber.

If that wasn't enough, someone in the church told the pastor that James was running too many things at the church. The allegations and the viciousness behind them were ugly. James did not know people who called on the name of Jesus could be so ugly. He was not leaving Community Fellowship. God planted him there and he was just going to have to weather the storm. God told James not to fight, but to be still and pray. Sister Kamie and Sister Jeanie were behind him. Pastor Allen also supported James. Finally, James was confronted by the accusers.

James calmly told the accusers to find all the people he had done these evil deeds with. They could not do it. The same person who accused James of these things told the pastor that James was harsh with a musician. This musician was playing for a guest who was blind and the volume of the drums was drowning her out. James told the percussionist to bring the volume down. Because of this, the accuser became anger. After hearing all the details, one of the deacons finally stood up and asked the accuser, "Did Brother James do any thing to you"? The brother said," no." The deacon asked the brother was he jealous of James? With a nervous laugh he said, "No". Afterwards, the pastor told us the case was dismissed.

God really brought James from a long way. The old James would have been ready to fight. The new James just looked, listened and spoke when God told him. When the dust had settled, six people had left the church because of the situation. The ring leader went to another church and had to be corrected there. James called him by mistake one day and he asked James his name. He was very happy to hear from James. James was cordial and calm during the entire conversation. The gentleman told James when he left the church he suffered a massive heart attack. James told him he was sorry to hear that and offered him prayer. Sometime passed and James did not hear from him.

As James was getting ready to leave from a visit home, a church member told James the gentleman was involved in an ugly relationship. The same sin he falsely accused James of being engaged in was what he was struggling with. However, his sin was made public. James found no glory in his downfall and he still continues to keep him lifted in prayer.

After giving his hometown four years of service, James was ready to move on. James did not want to go back to Charisma Magazine because of the long commute. James remembered all the traveling he had done and liked it. He decided to seek a career in the airline industry. At the displeasure of family and some church members, James set up an interview. Like he said earlier, he has "job faith". James was proclaiming he had the job before the people at Delta called him.

James just knew God was going to favor him with the job. Two weeks later, James received a call from Delta Air Lines giving him the details of training. At this time James was teaching at Endeavour Elementary School. James' boss was Debbie Lyons.

James knew this woman was sent into his life by God. She was not overly religious, but a woman of faith.

James walked into her office one morning and before he could say a word she told him he was getting married or had a new job. James was at a loss for words. He told her it was the latter. James really did not know how she would react. He told her the job was with Delta Air Lines. Believe it or not, she was more excited than he was about the job offer. She told him she did not want to see him go, but she believed in allowing people to follow his or her dream. To show she had no ill will, she gave James a leave of absence and told him that if for some reason he decided to come back, his job was protected.

After James finished his training with Delta, he had five months before going on his first assignment. Mrs. Lyons allowed James to work for those months like he had never left. As soon as James could get family and friends passes, she received the first two. She taught James the importance of not being selfish. She released James into his destiny and in return, she received a blessing.

James' true test came when he moved to New York City. He was strong in every place he had ever lived, but nothing prepared him for New York City. First, there were many different cultures and everything seemed new. People were very direct and to the point. Also, James began to get attention from people. People would come up and ask for a date. James was floored. When women gave him attention, it was ok. However, he started getting noticed from men and it made him very uncomfortable.

Knowing what he did prior to him coming to New York, James brush those advances off quite quickly. As he started working for Delta, James rarely got Sundays off and he missed the fellowship with the men and women of God. James also slipped into habits that he would never dream of in his earlier days. He began to curse like a sailor.

He remembered calling his mother one day to tell her about a situation at work and what he said to a co-worker who made him upset. His mother said, "The blood of Jesus." Then she asked him did he repent? James had never gone to a club in college, but in New York, he started going to clubs. That opened the door for the enemy to really work on him. Before he moved to New York, James was strong in the faith and he had put his past transgressions behind him. However, in New York, those dormant issues were at his doorstep knocking ever so hard.

One Sunday James was watching Pastor John Cherry's wife on television. She was ministering about finances. It was something about how she ministered that drew him to listen. She was not talking about deliverance or sin. She was only talking about finances. James repented and got his life on track.

When one makes a choice to follow Jesus, the devil goes into overtime. James chose freedom. He realized through this journey he used his God given gifts to lure people into sin. James recognized no matter how deep and spiritual he though he had become, he had to come to the realization that self-righteousness is a spirit of pride. All of his being deep and spiritual could not help him when he was going through his storm. James had to become humble before the Lord.

Pride and who one thinks he is will bring one down. God allowed James to go through major tests. By doing this, he made James stronger and educated him in how the world system thinks.

One can not tell anyone about healing if one has never been sick. James does not desire anyone to go through what he had to endure, but God used him because he knew James would come out. He used James because he would be a witness. Because of James' test, he has a greater level of compassion for anyone who is going through a test.

Lastly, addiction is sin! Everyone has sinned. One can be forgiven and delivered. The battle is in the mind. God has showed James this over and over again. Before closing, James was forty to fifty pounds over weight. He liked, and he still likes, food very much. James was a slim guy during high school and his freshman year of college, but he started eating more than he was burning off. As time went by, James gained weight. After college, he was a big man. James could hide the weight very well with the clothes he wore. Also, his body shape helped him. James had a football players build.

He was not obese, but he knew he needed to lose some pounds. While James was in Ohio, he knew he had to do something when his back started hurting. At first, James tried to diet. It was quick and it worked for a period of time. However, after a few months James gained more weight.

God showed James the period of time it took him to gain the weight and pointed out to him it was not coming off overnight. James began to exercise and stop going to Golden Corral, Ryan's and any all you can eat Chinese Buffet. James started going to places he had to pay extra when he wanted to eat more. Most of the time James did not want to pay so he left.

James did loose the weight. It has been a year and four months and the weight is still off. James went down to two hundred and forty-five to one hundred and ninety. Now, James can go to Golden Corral and Ryan's, but he knows his limit and what he can and can not eat. In the past, if the buffet cost eight dollars, James had to eat a minimum of eight plates. Thank God for deliverance! With that said, sometimes one has to leave old surroundings and people until one is strong enough to minister without going back into the situation. Also, the mind set has to change. God can heal in an instance if he desires, but he usually allows people to go through a process.

When James lost the weight, he had to exercise and eat right. Until he did that, the weight stayed on. James learned many things on this journey, but the most important lesson he learned is this: Sin is transferable and addiction is the common link. With this in mind, be careful in how one views the outlook of others and the struggles they may have. Remember, someone's struggle may be another's struggle tomorrow.

CHAPTER TWO

The State of the Art in this Ministry

Cincinnati was founded in 1788 by John Cleves Summers. Surveyor John Filson named it Losantiville from four terms, each of different language, meaning "The city opposite the mouth of the Licking River." 'Ville" is French for "city," "anti" is Greek for "opposite," "os" is Latin for "mouth," and "L" was all that was included of "Licking River."[1]

In 1790, Arthur St. Clair, the governor of the Northwest Territory, changed the name of the settlement to "Cincinnati" in honor of the Society of the Cincinnati, of which he was president. The society honored General George Washington, who was considered a latter day Cincinnatus-the Roman general who saved his city, then retired to his farm. To this day, Cincinnati in particular, and Ohio in general, are home to a disproportionately large number of descendants of Revolutionary War soldiers who were granted lands in the state.[2]

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[1] Wikipedia contributors, "The History of Cincinnati, Ohio," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_Cincinnati%2C_Ohio&oldid=159272263 (accessed May 19, 2007).

[2] Ibid.

In 1802, Cincinnati was chartered as a village, and in 1819, it was incorporated as a city. The introduction of steam navigation on the Ohio River in 1811 and the completion of the Miami and Erie Canal helped the city grow to 115,000 citizens by 1850.

Called the "Queen of the West" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Cincinnati was an important stop on the Underground Railroad, which helped slaves escape from the South. Cincinnati is also known as the "City of Seven Hills," which is probably a romantic reference to Rome and Cincinnatus.[3] Because of its river setting and extensive park system, many commentators have remarked on Cincinnati's beauty, including Winston Churchhill, who called it "the most beautiful of America's inland cities."[4]

Cincinnati was the first city in America to have a professional baseball team, then known as the Red Stockings, later renamed as the Reds. Cincinnati like other cities is headquarters to many corporations. In the late 1800's, William Proctor and James Gamble established the company known as Proctor and Gamble, who made Star Candles. The candles were shipped to the Ohio River by dray (a sort of wagon) and each box was marked with a star inside of a circle. This logo eventually evolved into the Moon and Stars logo that was recently removed from their products because a few people thought it was satanic. Actually, the logo featured a moon with 13 stars, one for each of the original colonies.

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

William Proctor was known to be a very patriotic and devout man. Barney Kroger began a bakery that eventually grew into Kroger supermarket chain, which has stores in most every US state. General Electric produces jet engines at their plant just north of Cincinnati and the Voice of America broadcasts from a transmitter located in the Queen City.[5] Cincinnati is located in Hamilton County, which was named for Alexander Hamilton, who incidentally succeeded George Washington as the Secretary-General of the Society of the Cincinnati.[6]

Welcome to the home of "Big Joe," a 35,000 pound, bronze-cast swinging bell. The bell was rung only once because its E-flat note is said to have shattered nearby windows, and it now rests dormant at the St. Francis DeSales Church. Walnut Hills has a deep historic past. The community grew in the 18th century around the establishment of the First Presbyterian Church and the intersection of two roads, now busy commercial districts. The neighborhood was once home to many of the city's aristocrats, who built the majestic mansions and elegant building that still dominate the landscape in Walnut Hills.[7]

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[5] James Reuter, "A Brief History of Cincinnati," Grex Electronic Town Hall, http://www.grex.org/~omni/cin2.htm (accessed May 19, 2007).

[6] Ibid.

[7] The Home Ownership Center of Greater Cincinnati. "Walnut Hills," http://www.cincinnatihome.org/neighborhoods/walnuthills/wlnthls_main.asp (accessed May 19, 2007).

Homes in the historic neighborhood of Walnut Hills represent the full spectrum of styles, sizes and prices from the most basic starter homes to million dollar mansions. Walnut Hills is adjacent to one of Cincinnati's most concentrated cultural centers, Eden Park, home of the Cincinnati Art Museum, the Art Academy and Playhouse in the Park.[8]

Ammons United Methodist Church is located at the corner of Ashland Avenue and East McMillan Street between the Walnut Hills and the East Walnut Hills sections of Cincinnati. Ammons, which was organized in June of 1996, was founded by Dr. Fredrick Heath. Ammons is the first Cincinnati Methodist church in thirty years to be named after an African-American. Its namesake is Bishop Edsel Ammons, immediate predecessor to Bishop Judith Craig, of the denomination's West Ohio Conference.[9]

The predominately African-American Ammons congregation used to share a building with Walnut Hills-Avondale United Methodist Church a predominately white congregation. Once eight-hundred members strong, the 150 year-old Walnut Hills-Avondale church dwindled down to 100 members. Reverenced Heath was pastor of both congregations.[10] Currently, Ammons United Methodist Church has 225 members, mostly African-Americans. The main service capitalizes on contemporary Charismatic worship forms.

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Steve Huba. "Newly charted church spicing up Methodism." *The Cincinnati Post*, October 18, 1998.

[10] Ibid.

Ammons United Methodist Church is located between two neighborhoods, Walnut Hills and East Walnut Hills. Here are some facts about Walnut Hills and East Walnut Hills. The current population of Walnut Hills is 7,790. The current population of East Walnut Hills is 3,630. The total projected five year population change expected is -10% for the combined area.[11]

In Walnut Hills African-Americans represent 84.1% of the population. Whites represent 13.3% of the population while other ethnic groups are less than 2% of the population. In East Walnut Hills African Americans represent 33.3% of the population. Whites represent 63.0% of the population while other ethnic groups represent 3% of the population.[12]

In Walnut Hills African-Americans account for 16.3% of the unemployment rate while whites account for only 5.5%. 46.3% of African-Americans are below the poverty level in Walnut Hills while whites only account for 12.4%. The median income for African-Americans in Walnut Hills is 7,647.00. The median income for whites is 29,563.00.[13]

In East Walnut Hills African-Americans account for 12.7% of the unemployment rate while whites account for only 1.1%. 43.0% of African-Americans are below the poverty level in East Walnut Hills while whites only account for 7.9%.

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[11] Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission., "Cincinnati Statistical Neighborhoods," October 2001.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Kathy Atkinson, "Census Demographic Comparisons," April 2001.

The median income for African-Americans in East Walnut Hills is 11,404.00. The median income for whites is 35,798.00.[14] In Walnut Hills education of persons 25 years or older with less than a high school education is 43.55%. In East Walnut Hills persons 25 years or older with less than a high school education is 21.4%. In Walnut Hills education on persons 25 years or older with a high school education is 24.2%. In East Walnut Hills persons 25 years or older with high school education is 10.8%.

In Walnut Hills persons 25 years or older with college education is 32.3%. In East Walnut Hills persons 25 years or old with college education is 67.8%.[15] In Walnut Hills there are 1,501 family households. In addition, there are 854 families with children under 18years. Also, there are 446 married couple families. There are 929 female householders with no husband present with 638 children under 18. In East Walnut Hills there are 649 family households. In addition, there are 388 families with children under 18 years. Also, there are 156 married couple families. There are 435 female householders with no husband present with 298 children under 18.[16]

There are approximately 300,000 calls for police service citywide and Walnut Hill's area receives approximately 12,000 of those calls. Overall the percent of change in the community has been 1.2% and citywide it has been 1.1%.[17] In East Walnut Hills, where Ammons United Methodist Church is located, 35% of the population has no church involvement.

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

29% of the population in Walnut Hills has moderate church involvement. 35% of the community has a strong church involvement. The overall faith receptivity level is somewhat low in the community. Community and social services are the overall church program preference.[18]

Ammons United Methodist Church is in the midst of an ever changing neighborhood. As the statistics have shown, African-Americans are behind in pay and employment. Many people are moving out of once upscale Walnut Hills and East Walnut Hills to the suburbs of Cincinnati.

The current administration of Ammons has been slow to reach out to the residence of Walnut and East Walnut Hills. The writer has spoken to various people in the area who did not know the church was functioning on Sundays. Dr. Fredrick Heath, who was responsible for the success of Upton United Methodist Church in Toledo, Ohio, is now the chief administrator for Ammons. Dr. Heath took a dying church in Toledo (Upton United Methodist Church) and brought Spirit-Filled Christians of other denominations to join the United Methodist faith. These Christians aligned their style of worship to the Methodist faith. The church in Toledo flourished. Dr. Heath came to Cincinnati with the hope of repeating his success at Ammons United Methodist Church; however, more than seven pastors have come and gone since the church was charted in 1996.

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[18] Percept Group, Inc. "Census Bureau Statistics," *Claritas* 15 (1997- 2005): 6, http://www.percept.info (accessed June 15, 2006).

The ministries that tried to jump start the church mostly focused inwardly rather than being outwardly focused. Because of so many leadership changes, the church membership has never been over 275. Most of the congregation are low-income and have very little formal education. The current preacher operates in a "revelatory ministry" which is difficult for people who have studied the bible to even understand; therefore, the un-churched and the new believers in Christ have all but left the church. There is a praise and worship team of three people.

Currently, the church is trying to start a choir and ushers usually donate time from Sunday to Sunday. Every 5th Sunday, the United Methodist Men sponsors a 100 men march. This is a community fellowship and ministry to men in the community.

The church has filled positions warranted by the United Methodist Church. The United Methodist Women and Men groups meet on specials occasion to plan functions on such days as Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years Eve. The church has a catering business that feeds the two day cares in the massive church edifice. The church used to have a job development program, but due to internal and external problems, the program was not renewed by Ammons. The church has love and care group ministries that operate under Ammons, but have separate services. The writer has begun ministering at the morning services.

In this chapter, the writer uses the process of synergy to merge the process of transformative learning. The process relies on self analysis as a key role in determining the author's strategic place in ministry. The writer believes that synergy is vital to providing a firm foundation to any ministry.

When a pastor and his or her congregation can come together on common ground to solve challenges and render Spirit led ministry, then synergy has taken place. Epistemic, sociolinguistic, and psychological perspectives must take place continually during ones journey in ministry. The writer believes that evaluating ones experiences, values and utilizing self analysis will bring a certain level of balance in ones overall ministry.

Personal experiences, growth in the area of ministry, and seminary studies, has given James the necessary skill set to master the process of self directed learning for church ministries. James remembers vividly how unfulfilled and unchallenged he felt when attending his childhood assembly. Many of the teachings were based on traditions and some where not scriptural. James was often forbidden to ask questions or make comments concerning certain passages in the bible, but was told to take the pastor and his teaching as gospel truth. This reasoning and traditional culture was not conducive to the way James wanted to gather information about God and the church.

While in college, James joined a college fellowship that encouraged questions, quiet time with God, and study. This group provided work sheets that required in-depth study about the bible and the characters in the bible. During these studies, James found himself learning more about ministry and its function. Also, James found an assembly where he was taught and self directed learning was encouraged.

"Why did you leave us?" "We thought you were our family and you have been here since you were born." "Those other churches do not teach our doctrine and you will be confused dealing with those Pentecostal people." "The church has invested all of this money in you and now you are leaving? "

"I guess you are not a part of us anymore?" All of these hurtful things were said at some point and time to James for leaving his childhood assembly. The people who James loved so much had little or nothing to do with him after he left to pursue greater knowledge of the bible at other places of worship. Even though James was wounded for sometime, he was assured he did the right thing. He left liberated because he now had a working knowledge of the bible and ministry. His growth was no longer stunted by traditions and controlling entities. He finally launched out into the deep and left the shore.

Ammons United Methodist Church has common characteristics as does the writer. During its formative stages, the church was very traditional in style and worship; however, the style and worship changed to a more contemporary setting. Some individuals resigned their membership after this change took place.

Ammons took a risk to change the order and worship style of the service not knowing the immediate result of its impact. Ammons had a great influx of preachers to grace its pulpit, but many of the pastors did not teach or encourage self-directed learning; instead, they preached in a traditional fashion. Lastly, many members have been hurt in the congregation by previous and some current leadership. Until healing occurs, there will be no progress. The writer believes that self directed learning in the church will bring empowerment, trust and restoration to the Ammons church family.

It is clear that the author and his context share many common experiences. James was nurtured in a traditional congregation and he left to grow and experience worship in a new form. He was not sure what would happen, but was totally dependent on faith in God to see him through. Ammons changed its traditional service for many of the same reasons. Also, they were not sure of the impact the change would have.

James was hurt in the church by leadership because of his quest for understanding the bible and ministry. Many people at Ammons have been hurt by leadership. Some have left the church and others will not participate in church activities for fear of being hurt again. Unlike some of the hurting people at Ammons, James was able to conquer his hurt by studying and meditating on what he read in bible. As James teaches and asks members questions relating to the topic at hand, he has seen a positive change in the congregation towards learning and bringing others to the ministry. The writer believes the congregation will be able to conquer hurt as he did during this self directed learning process.

CHAPTER THREE

Theoretical Foundations

Ammons United Methodist Church is located in one of Ohio's largest metropolitan areas. Ammons is located in Cincinnati, Ohio. Cincinnati is home to many major corporations. Proctor and Gamble, Federated Department Store, Chiquita Banana, Great American Insurance Company and the giant supermarket chain Kroger's are a few of many Fortune 500 companies that looks down on the winding Ohio River. Cincinnati is also home to two professional sports teams, the Cincinnati Reds and the Cincinnati Bengals.

The region is noted for its excellent medical facilities. According to U.S. News and World Report, 2006 edition, Cincinnati's Christ Hospital ranked in the top twenty-five for heart hospitals.[19] Cincinnati's University Hospital ranked in the top twenty in four major categories.[20]

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[19]RTI International, "America's Best Hospitals 2006 ," *U.S. News and World Report*, www.usnew.com./health/best-hospitals/tophosp.htm (accesses on July 15, 2006).

[20] Ibid.

The Metropolitan Cincinnati area is not lacking when it comes to higher education. The area boasts of many fine institutions of higher learning. The University of Cincinnati, Xavier University of Ohio, the College of Mount Saint Joseph, Cincinnati Christian University, Cincinnati State and Technical College, The Union Institute and University, Northern Kentucky University, which is across the Ohio River from Ohio, Thomas More College, Gateway Community College and God's Bible College are all accredited colleges and university in the Metropolitan Cincinnati area.

The region also has a rich religious heritage. Martin Wells Knapp, founder of God's Bible College, greatly influenced William J. Seymour. Reverend Seymour was the leader of the great Azusa Street Revival of 1906. William J. Seymour, an African-American, was born May 2, 1870, in Centerville, Louisiana, to former slaves Simon and Phyllis Seymour, who raised him Baptist. Later, while living in Cincinnati, Ohio, he came into contact with holiness teachings through Martin Wells Knapp's God Revivalist movement.[21]

Methodism played a major role in the history of Cincinnati as well. Methodism came riding into Cincinnati on horseback in the person of Reverend John Kobler in 1798. Reverend John Kobler arrived in Ft. Washington which is now the name of Cincinnati.[22] The Next Methodist preachers who came to Cincinnati were Reverends Lewis Haul and Elisha Bowman, who preached occasionally and went their way.

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[21]Gary B. McGhee, "William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revivals," *Enrichment Journal* 4 (1999): 26.

[22]S.B. Nelson and J.M. Runk, *History of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Ohio: Their Past and Present* (Cincinnati: S.B. Publishers, 1894), 199-200.

Meanwhile Reverend Francis McCormick, who is regarded as the founder of Methodism in Ohio, had preached and organized a Society near Columbia in 1801.

In 1804 Reverend John Collins came to town to buy provisions, and finding the storekeeper, Mr. Carter, a Methodist, was so overjoyed that he fell on his neck and wept. That night Mr. Collins preached to twelve persons in an "upper room" in Mr. Carter's house.[23]In that same year, Reverend John Sale, the regular minister of the Miami Circuit, preached in the house on Main Street, between First and Second Streets, to a congregation of thirty five persons, and formed the first Society of Methodist Episcopal Church in Cincinnati.[24]

With all of the major corporations, hospitals facilities, universities and rich spiritual, as well as religious history, one would imagine Cincinnati to be a city of stability. However, this is not the case. The region's corporations are downsizing workers at an alarming rate. Nutone Corporation, a major manufacturer, has shut its doors and moved to Canada leaving thousands of workers unemployed. General Electric has reduced its workforce. AK Steel, a company in the region, has locked-out its workforce and replaced them with cheaper labor. Sara Lee has downsized drastically and even the mighty Proctor and Gamble has reduced its work pool.

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

Even though the region has some of the best hospitals, many residents have little or no health insurance at all and the infant mortality rate in Cincinnati is extremely high. According to The Cincinnati Enquirer, more than 270,000 people in Greater Cincinnati and Northern, Kentucky does not have health insurance, according to new health care data, an increase of 70,000 since 2002.[25]

Also, Hamilton County officials say they are troubled by the infant mortality rates that are higher than the national average. Federal government statistics reported that infant mortality rates nationwide climbed for the first time in more than four decades. Nationally, the infant mortality rate jumped from 6.8 deaths per 1,000 births in 2001 to seven deaths in 2002. Hamilton County rates out pace national figures.
In 2001, there were 124 infant deaths. That's a rate of 10.5 per 1,000 live births. The state average was 7.6.[26]

Cincinnati area is home to some of the best colleges in Ohio. Unfortunately, the same can not be said of the secondary public school system. Cincinnati Public School's graduation rate was 57.6 percent as reported by the Ohio Department of Education in the district's 2002 report card. At the present time the school system is continually improving; however, 53.9 percent of the students scored proficient or higher on the Science Ohio Graduation Test and 62 percent of the students scored proficient or higher in the Math Ohio Graduation test.

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[25]Peggy O'Farrell, "Number of Uninsured Rising," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 14 March 2002, D11.

[26]Matt Leingang, "High Infant-Mortality rate here Puzzles Health Experts," *Cincinnati Enquirer,* February 15, 2004, www.enquirer.com/editions/2004/02/15/loc_infantmortality15.html (accessed May 15, 2006).

Even though it is quite evident that Cincinnati has a rich religious and spiritual heritage, the church seems ill-equip in handling the many ills of the city. The Cincinnati riots of 2001 caused a major blow to the city's image. The city has become more violent than ever. There have been forty-six homicides in the city since July 7, 2006, and the year is not complete.[27] Drug trafficking and prostitution are crimes that also beleaguers the city of Cincinnati.

The writer strongly believes the chaotic state in the church is being reflected in our chaotic society. Many congregations have members who are unemployed, sick, and under or uneducated. Many people do not know or may not care about the church's legacy. The church has to do an internal evaluation before it (the church) can go forward and do an external work. In other words, we must get employed, get healed, get educated and know who we are before we can truly help others.

2 Chronicles 7:14 states, "If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven , and will forgive their sins, and will heal their land."[28]

According to the Barna Group, Christian education attendance is at 24 percent in 2006 and Christians who read their bible during a typical week is at 47 percent[29]. It is evident why the church is ineffective. The church is not reading and studying the Word of God. How can the church compel souls to come to a Christ they know nothing about?

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[27]Jay Warren, "Coroner Sounds off after City's 46th Homicide," WCPO –TV: Cincinnati, July 31, 2006, www.wcpo.com/news/2006/local/07/31/O'Dwell.html (accessed on August 19, 2006).

[28] 2Chr.7:14 (New King James Version)

[29] George Barna, "Sunday School/Christian Education," *The Barna Group*, www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=Topic&topicID=9 (accessed August 8, 2006).

How can the church release healing in peoples' lives when the church is in search of healing itself? The writer believes the church can only help others when the church makes a conscience effort to help itself.

As stated in chapter one, the writer was involved in religious rituals and not a committed relationship. When the writer learned to educate him self and pray for wisdom, then and only then, was he effective in transforming his life, while helping others do the same. The author had mentors to facilitate him on his journey to transformative learning.

The writer is confident that self-directed learning in the church will produce educated Christians that will be equipped to evangelize and empower a powerless people. When the church educates the people, they will be equipped and empowered to evangelize the gospel to all nations. It is evident the writer's context is an urban setting riddled with numerous problems. When the members build the foundation of the church through meaningful learning experiences, the congregational development and administration piece can take place.

Cranton teaches critical reflection is the central process in transformative learning. Our natural human interest in emancipation drives us to reflect on the way we see ourselves, our history, our knowledge, and out social roles.[30] Furthermore, Cranton points out that meaning perspectives work as filters, frameworks, or paradigms that shape our perceptions of ourselves, others, and our surroundings.[31]

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[30] Patricia Cranton, *Professional Development as Transformative Learning: New Perspectives for Teachers of Adults* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 1996), 75.

[31] Ibid.

Meaning perspectives are formed through experiences. One's past experiences shapes the way one assimilates new experiences.[32] The writer strongly believes that spiritual autobiographies are one of many ways the church can perform critical reflection, as well as meaning perspectives. Knowing ones self is the beginning of self-directed learning.

Many critics believe the self-directed learning model is not effective. In *Resistance to Self-Direction in Adult Learning: Myths and Misunderstandings,* Ralph G. Brockett explains some of the critic's arguments against self-directed learning. Some critics believe self-directed learning is an all-or-nothing concept. It is not common to hear educators speak of self-direction as a dichotomous concept.

In this view, a learning situation is viewed as either self-directed or instructor directed and the learning is seen as being either self-directed or not self-directed.[33] Also some critics feel that self-directed implies learning in isolation, that self-directed learning activities are limited primarily to reading and writing and that facilitating self-direction is an easy way out for teachers.[34]

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Ralph Brockett, *Resistance to Self-Direction: New Dimension for Adult and Continuing Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994), 6-12.

[34] Ibid.

Lastly, many critics feel that self-direction in learning is limited to primarily white, middle class adults.[35]Brocket states that such a view ignores that learners vary greatly in learning styles and thus, will likely possess different degrees of self-directedness, and educators or trainers very greatly in teaching styles and thus, will promote different degrees of self-direction in their instructional setting. A different approach is to think about self-direction as a continuum where it is viewed as a characteristic that exists, to greater or lesser degree, in all persons and in all learning situations.[36]

Many people think that a self-directed learner is a person who works in isolation and does not interact with others. It is true that many such situations are often characterized by times of intense, focused individual inquiry:

Yet, at some point, interaction is what makes new insights and growth possible.[37]Many critics believe that self-directed learning is limited primarily to reading and writing. Such a view fails to recognize the wide array of situations where learning is linked to skill development and performance.

Self-direction holds much promise for skill and performance based learning because it stresses an experiential approach to learning, where the learner is an active participant rather than a passive recipient of information.[38]

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

Some may believe that self-directed learning is a tool for teachers who are lazy. This school of thought is quite erroneous. Those who work with the principles and practices of self-directed learning clearly understand that they need to take a very active approach to working with learners.

In fact, self-direction typically involves a deeper commitment from instructors because they need to focus their energy on each learner, as well as on the group as a whole. Hiemstra (1958) has described this teaching – learning transaction is self-directed learning situations as a "learning partnership."[39]

Finally, many critics feel that self-direction in learning is limited primarily to white, middle class adults. The writer disagrees with this premise. The writer, who is not white, believes that self-directed learning may help the hard-to-reach individual. Also, the writer is inclined to say self-directed learning is not just limited to secular education, but can be effectively used in Christian education as well.

Brockett states, there is an extensive body of research showing that self-direction in learning is a phenomenon that can be found is all strata of our society as well as in many societies outside of North America and Western Europe.[40]

The author is of the belief that self-directed learning will bring about liberating change in the church. People will be able to learn at their own pace. The congregation will be able to learn through performing arts, fine arts, history and the spoken word. With self-directed learning, we will think outside of the box, but inside the Word of God.

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[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

Most importantly, the learner will be responsible and take an active part in his or her learning. The hypothesis of the author is that when the church effectively uses self-directed learning, the "Four E's" will take place: The church will begin to educate its people in meaningful learning that will equip and empower them to evangelize[41]. Jesus taught his disciples using self-directed learning techniques.

When feeding the five thousand, Jesus allowed the disciples to take an active part. The disciples organized the people so everyone could eat. Jesus equipped the disciple when he gave them the power to cast out demons and heal the sick in His name. Since the disciples believed that Jesus' name had power, they were empowered to cast out demons and heal the sick. However, when the Holy Spirit came down upon the disciples in the upper room (another form of empowerment), they evangelized.

Reggie McNeal states that in the emerging world the learning process will be more shaped than scripted. This possibility is conceivable because of the information that used to be locked up in text-books, classrooms, and teachers. Learners will proceed at their own pace and learn the way they learn best.[42]

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[41] "Four E's" in this document refers to the writer's results of successfully administering self-directed learning. Laity should become educated, equipped and empowered to evangelize.

[42] Reggie McNeal, *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 90.

Historical Foundations

To provide historical foundations for this project the writer will attempt to make clear the importance self-directed learning has played in the liberation of Christians. The author will use the time of slavery as backdrops to solidify his views. The author also wants to point out that self-directed learning serves as an accountability tool to ensure all are treated with respect and dignity.

The writer realizes that self-directed learning requires leaders that are confident, yet are not thirsty for power and control over the people he or she serves. In order for a self-directed learning model to be executed correctly, the church leaders must allow the participants to take an active role in his or her learning. The leader must act as a resource contact and facilitator. This was not the case during slavery.

During slavery, self-directed learning was the only tool of learning available for most slaves and blacks in the south during that period. Even though the slaves had extreme barriers, self-directed learning helped them to empower themselves to read and write. In turn, they helped other slaves to do the same. If it worked for the slaves in the past with limited resources, think about how it will work for the church in the present.

During the time of slavery, there was a young black man by the name of Daniel Payne who used self-directed learning. Orphaned at an early age, with only a few years of formal schooling, Payne applied uncommon energies to his goal of self-education. As a teenager he worked as a carpenter's apprentice during the day, then read and studied until midnight and began reading again at 4:00a.m. In this way he taught himself some

Basic English grammar, geography, Greek, Latin, French and natural science.[43]He opened his own school when he was nineteen. By 1835 Daniel Payne was offering his black students training in English, botany and biology. Payne was a self-taught colored man who learned biology by catching and processing his own specimens was more than a curiosity.

As Christians, the white clergy were committed to a belief in the brotherhood of man and descent of all human beings from Adam, and they were defending these beliefs against the challenge of rational and skeptical thought. Bachman, in fact, became deeply involved in refuting Josiah Nott's theories of the separate creation of races.[44]

Daniel Payne went on to found Wilberforce University in Wilberforce, Ohio. This is a gleaming success story of a self-directed learner during a hostile time. The powers that be did not want blacks to learn. However, self-directed learning was the key to Daniel Payne's success. There is yet another self-directed learning success story.

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[43] Janet Duitsman Cornelius, *When I Can Read My Title Clear: Literacy, Slavery, and Religion in the Antebellum South* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 49.

[44] Ibid.

Thomas Johnson, an enslaved African-American hired out to work in a Richmond tobacco factory was intelligent, diligent, and resourceful. At twenty-one he has become a Christian convert as a result of the Great Revival of 1857.

Soon after his conversion, Johnson felt a deep desire to preach the gospel, but he was faced with two difficulties: he was a slave, and he could not read the Bible, a skill which a preacher was expected to have. He therefore decided it was up to him to gain the skills he needed by taking advantage of every opportunity to learn all he could.[45]

In the later years, as a missionary in England, Johnson often told how he accomplished his goals. He secreted an old Bible in his room and poured over it in his spare time, beginning with Genesis and calling out the letters of each word he could not understand: "In the b-e-ginning God c-r-e-a-t-e-d the heaven and the earth." His young master read aloud a chapter from the New Testament every night and Johnson tried to get him to read the same one over and over. When Johnson knew this chapter practically by heart, he recognized the words in the chapter.

Then he found identical words elsewhere in the Bible and traced identical syllables of the other words. Johnson explained, "I got to understand a little about the Bible, and at the same time I was learning to spell." Johnson knew what learning to read and write would do for him at an early age.

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[45] Ibid.

He knew it was a ticket to freedom. As soon as he was old enough to understand, his mother had explained to him what it meant to be a slave and the difference between the condition of black people and white people, but told him that if he would learn to read and write then some day he might be able to get his freedom.[46]

Paul Escott, a writer for the Federal Writers Project wrote that learning to read and write could empower slaves in their battle against the white world. Reading and writing, above all, pointed the way to freedom-----first of all in mind and spirit, and often in the body.[47]The writer recognizes that many southern blacks during this era were self-directed learners. When the slaves learned how to read and write, they would pass the knowledge on to the other slaves. The amazing fact is that most of them learned by reading the Bible. God's word is power! Many went on to become educators, pastors and missionaries.

As Christians, we are to assist and help the churched and un-churched become liberated from the chains of the evil one. However, we must be taught. Even during the period of slavery, the slaves knew studying the word was an integral part to help others who wanted to be liberated as well. With only 24 percent of Americans attending Christian education functions, with only 47 percent of Americans attending church services and only 47 percent of Americans reading the Bible on a typical week, we have to change the way we teach.[48]

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[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] George Barna, "Sunday School/Christian Education," *The Barna Group*, www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=Topic&topicID=9 (accessed August 8, 2006).

There has been a 92 percent increase in the number of un-churched Americans in the last thirteen years to 39 million in 1991 to 75 million in 2004.[49] During the period of slavery, there were many Bibles because of the printing presses, but slaves were not allowed to read them.

What is our excuse now? We have an abundance of Bibles and slavery has ended. Self-directed learning has played a crucial role throughout history. The writer believes that self-directed learning will be important for the present and the future as well.

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

The scriptures encourage self-directed learning for the believers of Christ. At some point, believers of Christ will have to spend some quiet time alone to read and meditate on the Word of God. The believer will have to take charge of his or her learning. Only the believer can be held accountable for his or her learning.

"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So that everyone of us shall give an account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:11-12)[50].

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[49] Ibid.

[50] Rom.14:11-12 (NKJV)

Knowing this, we can not blame anyone else for our lack or underdevelopment in the Word of God. If you are being held accountable to someone or something, would it not be important to know what you are being held accountable for?
With the proper guidance, a person who is engaged in self-directed learning will not be in doubt to what is expected of him or her.

There is a saying that states, "What you do not know may hurt you". The writer believes that when we allow men and women to take charge of his or her learning, we allow them to choose life.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hs. 4:6)[51]. The author is of the opinion that self-directed learning will empower the people in our congregations to have a heart to study and answer the tough questions facing people in our urban environments.

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2Tim 2:15)[52]. The self-directed learner will study to seek God's approval and not the approval of men. However, the self-directed learner will continue to work with others collectively. The self-directed learner will also want to seek God for the answer or allow God to have him or her seek out others. A self-directed learner always wants to make sure the word that is going out is correct and not false when teaching others. However, the learner must remember, he or she is still accountable for his or her own learning.

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[51] Hs. 4:6 (NKJV)

[52] 2Tim. 2:15 (NKJV)

The self-directed Christian learner who seeks knowledge will not be disappointed. The Lord promised if we seek knowledge, it will be granted unto us. "Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding: if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding" (Pro. 2:3-6)[53].

"And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease" (Mat. 10:1)[54]. As you have read, Jesus empowered his disciples by educating them, equipping them, empowering them and allowing them to evangelize.

Jesus did not try to control the disciples, but rather Jesus gave them assignments and allowed them to lay hands on the sick and cast out demons. The Word of God stated that Jesus gave the disciples the power.

What did Jesus do? Jesus gave the disciples a chance to explore the gifts. Jesus allowed them to go out on their own to perfect what was given to them. Jesus had to teach the disciples a valuable lesson concerning their newly acquired knowledge and power. "As the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lighting fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

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[53] Pro.2:3-6 (NKJV)

[54] Mat.10:1 (NKJV)

Not-with-standing in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather your names are written in heaven" (Lk. 10:17-20)[55]. The Bible mentions some self-directed learners from the city of Berea. "And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Therefore many of them believed: also of honorable women which were Greek, and of men, not a few" (Ac. 17:10-11)[56]. The writer believes that a self-directed learner will search the scriptures for the truth like the Bereans.

Even when the learner hears the Word of God, he or she will search the scripture for validity and growth. Because of the Berean's tenacity, many believed. Whether one is Berean, Greek or Jew, studying the Word of God will bring about liberation in one's life.

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:31-32)[57].

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[55] Lk.10:17-20 (NKJV)

[56] Ac.17:10-11 (NKJV)

[57] Jn.8:31-32 (NKJV)

Theological Foundations

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, and preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Lk. 4:18-19)[58].

As the writer stated earlier, when he committed himself to become a student of the Bible, the writer surrounded himself with mentors to explain and guide him in areas he was not sure about.

During this transformation, the writer grew stronger and more confident in navigating through the word. With the knowledge the writer obtained, he now felt as if he was in a relationship with Jesus and not a regimented religion. The old un-scriptural traditions and customs that held him back were now broken. The writer became liberated; therefore, the writer will focus on Liberation Theology. The writer strongly believes that education liberates the mind; however, the writer even has a stronger belief that Christian education will liberate the mind, body and spirit.

The writer will go further and say when a person has a vital role in his or her education and is able to make decisions about his or her goals; it makes education even more valuable. The writer is of the opinion that self-directed learning and Liberation Theology compliments each other.

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[58] Lk.4:18-19 (NKJV)

Liberation Theology encompasses all people. Liberation theology is for black people, white people, the prostitute, the alcoholic, the rich and the poor. The Word of God tells us that we are to preach the gospel to the poor. We are to heal the broken hearted. One does not have to be poor to be broken hearted.

We are to preach deliverance to those that are bound by all manner of circumstances. We are to recover the sight of the blind both spiritually and physically. Most important we must set at liberty those that are bruised and preach the acceptable year of our Lord. The writer believes this covers everyone.

In order for Christian to fulfill this mission, we must educate ourselves in the Word of God. When this is accomplished, we must equip ourselves with the tools and spiritual gifts God has given each of us. Afterwards, we will receive or become empowered to evangelize the nations.

We will be in compliance with Luke 4:18. Jesus gave us power to be liberators. "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works which I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do because I go unto my father" (Jn. 14:12)[59].

Paulo Freire, noted educator of the poor and oppressed say to affirm that men and women are persons and as persons should be free, and yet to do nothing tangible to make this affirmation a reality, is a farce.[60]

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[59] Jn.14:12 (NKJV)

[60] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1993), 35.

James Cone, a noted theologian and writer, states to sing freedom and to pray for its coming is not enough. Freedom must be actualized in history by the oppressed people who accept intellectual challenge to analyze the world for the purpose of changing it.[61] Cone also states that truth knows no color, it appeals to intelligence.[62]

Theologian Johannes Metz believed that a theologian should focus on three specific duties: to protect the narratives from distortion; to decode dogmas into practical, understandable material; to use methods of inquiry that highlight the political aspects of religion in their lives.[63] Metz claims that Christianity can not be justified in a purely theoretical way, but is primarily justified in its praxis, its committed responsible action. Human persons are not just doers of the word. We are to understand that we, the people of the church, are the ones responsible for this constant state of conversion and renewal.[64]

Metz also stated the church must use the gospel message of love, which does not change, even when society changes and be a force for love in the world. Metz concludes by saying, if the church fails to advocate for freedom for all in our world, the danger of losing freedom, justice and peace is, indeed, so great, that indifference in this matter would be a crime.[65]

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[61] James H. Cone, *Speaking The Truth: Ecumenism, Liberation, and Black Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), 46..

[62] Ibid.

[63] Colleen Chinn, "Johannes Metz" Spring Hill College Theology Library Resource Page, www.web2.shc.edu/theolibrary/resources/metz.htm (accessed May 15, 2007).

[64] Johannes Metz, *The Church and the World in Light of a Political Theology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), Chap. 5.

[65] Ibid.

Another champion of Liberation Theology is Dietrich Bonhoeffer. God, argued Bonhoeffer, must be known in this world as he operates and interacts with men in daily life. The abstract God of philosophical and theological speculation is useless to the average man on the street, and they are the majority who needs to hear the gospel.[66]

Bonhoeffer believed in self-directed learning. He stated the believer must plunge into the deep waters beyond the comprehension and everyday teaching of the church, and this must be done individually and collectively.[67] As the writer mentioned earlier, Liberation Theology is about giving liberty to those who are bruised.

Bonhoeffer's efforts to help a group of Jews escape to Switzerland were what led to his arrest and imprisonment in the spring 1943. He was hanged in the concentration camp at Flossenburg on April 9, 1945.[68]

It is evident in scriptures that Jesus was the Great Liberator. Jesus ate with the sinners and the outcasts. Jesus healed the Centurion soldier's servant. Jesus liberated Zacchaeus the tax collector and healed the woman with the issue of blood. Jesus cared about the state of all people. The writer believes it is time for the church to be educated, equipped, empowered and ready to go out and evangelize. It is not enough just to learn the word only to keep it to ourselves. It is important to study the Word of God individually and collectively.

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[66]Todd Koppelman, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer," Probe Ministries, www.probe.org/content/view/57/91 (accessed May 15, 2007).

[67] Peter Frick, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer," The International Dietrich Bonhoeffer Society, www.dbonhoeffer.org/mode/3 (accessed May 15, 2007).

[68] Ibid

In order to make new disciples, the church must have knowledge. Reggie McNeal states, Jesus told the Pharisees that they didn't get the point in their study of the Scriptures. "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me." These Bible scholars missed the point. The point is Jesus![69]

Our approach to biblical study must not stop short of applying to life. Bible study for the head only leads to arrogance and dangerous religious bigotry. It misses the main truth. The Bible is the story of God's determination to woo human beings with his heart so he can transform them with his love and partner with them in his redemptive mission in the world.[70]

The writer believes clergy must do more to encourage the body of Christ to study the word as the Bereans did. No longer can we keep a student-teacher model. As leaders, we must become resource guides and facilitators.

It is imperative that we become creative in our teaching methods and become more inviting. It is the writer's opinion that self-directed learning in the church will increase understanding of the word and will bring more membership involvement. When the church has a desire for people to learn, we will involve them in their learning process and not keep them out.

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[69] Reggie McNeal, *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 90.

[70] Ibid.

God dealt differently with Moses than with Peter, Paul, and Judas. The personal development process is highly labor intensive. God works through all of our lives to shape us into the people we should become. The Community of faith should be an environment where the number one pursuit is the development of human beings created in the image of God and redeemed into his family through Jesus.[71]

The Word of God is a liberating force. The Word of God states, "Whom the Son sets free, is free indeed" (Jn 8:36)[72]. The study of the word individually and collectively will set the people free.

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[71] Ibid.

[72] Jn.8:36 (NKJV)

CHAPTER FOUR

Methodology

The project James chose is important for numerous reasons. James was a product of a very staunch traditional church were the pastor controlled what was taught, who taught it and how it was to be taught. In his early years, James thought this was how the church was supposed to operate. The bible study was usually taught by the pastor who explained the bible according to his own views and left little room for any church member to object. When James became older and went off to college, he met other students from different denominations that were encouraged to study the bible. The writer observed that these students had advanced knowledge in the bible and were not afraid to evangelize. They seemed to have so much power because they knew and lived out the Word of God. James realized that he needed what the other students possessed, knowledge and understanding of the bible.

While attending college, the writer started to attend bible studies with the new students he met. They were more than willing to assist James in his journey to learn more about the bible. Even though James' new friends studied the bible with him, they stressed the importance of studying the bible alone during times of meditation and prayer.

They also emphasized the importance of God revealing knowledge to those individuals that diligently studied the bible. Because of the friends God led James to meet, he became even more dedicated to study the bible.

James matriculated to Norfolk State University in Virginia were he attended Faith Deliverance Christian Center. At this assembly, the practical teachings and sermons made the bible relevant to James and he began to take a practical approach in his teaching strategies. After graduating from college, James attended a worship service at his childhood church. Unfortunately, nothing changed since his departure to attend college. Furthermore, the people that desired to study the bible in depth and to grow more in spiritual matters were either silenced or left. At that point James realized that biblical and spiritual knowledge is power. James concluded that when one starts to advance in biblical studies others would either gravitate to the individual or be repelled by them. Those who were open to change and growth would seek out people who were constantly seeking to know God personally; however, those who did not want change and were comfortable with the normal routine of religion would come against those very individuals.

James also noticed the pastor of his childhood church was growing old and weary. This was a concern to James because the people looked to this pastor for spiritual guidance. This pastor taught the bible studies and preached in the general assembly almost every Sunday. The most startling reality was this pastor had not groomed anyone to replace him. James saw people in his childhood church that were not empowered. Most of the congregation could not function without this well tenured pastor.

After observing the activities that were taking place at his childhood church, James was convinced the clergy had a responsibility to encourage congregants to diligently study the bible and to seek God for his or her calling within the church.

James quickly came to the conclusion that any pastor who neglected to encourage the men and women of God in these areas had serious control issues or was selfish. Even in many of the contemporary services James attended, the bible studies were usually teacher led. Many contemporary churches had very unique services, but the bible studies were very traditional and routine in nature.

This project did not materialize until James' first year of attending United Theological Seminary. After reading Patricia Cranton's book on self-directed learning, and afterwards becoming a full time student in this method, the ideal of self-directed learning in the church seemed to be his calling. James immediately saw the disconnection in many bible studies. If churches are to have meaningful bible studies, the students should have something to study. The teacher should be the resource person, as well as the facilitator in the bible study to guide the student; furthermore, James believed the student should feel connected to the bible study through his or her contribution.

The "Four E's" also led James to do this project: Educating the people of God to become equipped and empowered to evangelize the nations. It is the writer's view that self-directed learning will lead to these actions. In addition to this belief, James is of the notion that self-directed learning will foster comprehensive learning as well. When self-directed learning is utilized, unselfish education will emerge. It will allow the church's learning community to know and grow. These are the beliefs of the author. In truth, James did not choose this project, rather the project chose him and he is the better for it.

Ammons United Methodist Church is a contemporary church of approximately 200 people nestled in the East Walnut Hill section of Cincinnati, Ohio. Ammons is named after Bishop Edsel Ammons who was the first black bishop in 30 years to preside over the Southwest Ohio District of the United Methodist Church. Dr. Fred Heath was the overseer and founder of Ammons United Methodist Church. His concept was to blend other denominations into the fold of Ammons United Methodist Church.

Because of this unusual concept, many pastors have come and gone and the church attendance has wavered every year never reaching over 225 people. Recently, Ammons has installed Reverend Vera Coles as its new pastor. Reverend Coles has been with Ammons for two years and served as its pastor for one year. The writer is an associate minister in charge of the 9:00 a.m. worship service. Thirty percent of the church's members are between the ages of one and eighteen; forty percent of the church's members are between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five; and thirty percent of the church's members are ages thirty-five and over. Even though Ammons is a contemporary United Methodist Church, bible study is traditional using the teacher/student method. The bible study has been this way since the founding of the church in 1996.

The church is starting to fellowship with other United Methodist Churches and is the founding member of the Men's March in Cincinnati. The Men's March is an extremely popular event where community churches men's fellowship comes together.

Most visitors of Ammons are individuals from other churches or the congregant's family members. Ammons' has an early morning worship service at 9:00 a.m.; a morning service at 11:00 a.m.; and a bible study at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday.

James believes that his journey from a traditional assembly were the people depended on the pastor for most or all of their spiritual needs, to a place where he began to seek and read the bible, to learning more in-depth practices of self-directed learning has help James to truly want to help others. Even though James attended contemporary worship services, there was a disconnection around the area of bible study and Sunday school. After using the method of self-directed learning, James has envisioned a concept to help others gain a more comprehensive approach to bible study.

James believes that Ammons is a contemporary church, but many members yearn to know more about the bible and they too want to grow in the area of biblical studies. The writer is of the belief that his experiences will help the congregation at Ammons. James realizes that unselfish people took the time with him to help him grow, and he is yet growing, in the area of self-directed learning. James is certain that God has sent him to learn and grasp the concept of self-directed learning to help Ammons rise to a new level of understanding in the area of Christian Education. Like James, the people of Ammons are open to change and new ideals. He knows God sent him to this congregation because it is not a typical United Methodist Church and James knows that self-directed learning is not a typical bible study curriculum.

History has shown us that when one is given the responsibility and tools for his or her learning, the individual becomes more motivated and vested in the learning process Daniel Payne is a great example of a student who was influenced by self-directed learning. He practiced the "Four E's" of self-directed learning. He was comprehensively educated which caused him to be equipped with knowledge; therefore, making him empowered to teach and evangelize others.

Self-directed learning may begin with the word self; however, the results usually benefit all mankind. Daniel Payne went on to become the founder and president of Wilberforce University which is still in operation in Xenia, Ohio. Wilberforce has helped thousands of men and women reach their goals through Christian education. In the book of Act, we are again reminded of people who actively participated in self-directed learning. The Bereans were open to hear the word of God, but they did further investigation of the bible scriptures that were preached. Many were added because of their steadfast nature in studying the scriptures on their own. The writer believes that a self-directed learning curriculum would save churches thousands of dollars in buying curriculum material. It would challenge pastors to have a fresh sermon because the curriculum would be taken from his or her morning sermon. The writer strongly believe that morning worship attendance would increase because the church's learning community would be inclined to hear the sermon for the Wednesday bible study and next Sunday's bible study as well. The writer believes this would be a major connection between the pastor and the church's Christian education department. Also, lay leaders and the pastoral staff could measure the effectiveness of the sermons.

The pastor could also gauge what sermons and lessons should be addressed by visiting the bible studies to observe student response.

The author has come to the belief the church's learning community will be more inclined to evangelize others because they will become more confidant and knowledgeable of the subject they preach and proclaim. The first type of treatment that the writer proposes concerning his project is hands on education.

James will do a test run of the self-directed learning curriculum with the church members that attend the 9:00 a.m. service. James will begin to preach sermons on studying and living out the word of God. He will preach a series of these sermons concerning this topic. Afterwards, James will inform the congregation that services will be led in a different manner on next Sunday. The writer will inform the congregation that everyone will become a "Pew Pastor" or minister for next Sunday's service.

James will give the congregation the topic of the sermon and then the writer will allow the members to choose assignments in four areas: history of the bible story chosen; the practical life application of the bible study chosen; using the fine arts and the performing arts for the bible study chosen; and seeing Jesus and his workings in the bible study chosen. For bible stories in the New Testament area, we will discus how Jesus is relevant in similar bible stories in the Old Testament. It will be the responsibility of the members to research and study the topic. The groups will be able to teach in the morning services in many creative ways. The writer will act as facilitator and a resource assistant. James will coach the members in areas that they may have difficulty in. The members will have 15 minutes to present what they studied and researched.

The writer will continue to serve as a resource assistant and facilitator during the morning worship service. The writer will then conclude the services with a recap of all the groups' findings and highlights.

Most churches do not operate in this manner; Ammons is not an exception. James wants the people to step outside of their comfort zones and become empowered men and women of God. James envisions the members as active participants. James also wants the congregation to think "outside the box, but inside the word of God".

James also wants to impress upon the congregation that studying, preparing, and executing the delivery of the word is to be taken very seriously. James realizes the seriousness of the word, but he wants the congregation to enjoy and become excited about what they will discover. James desires the congregation to become excited about what they are learning and what they may teach others.

The next step James will undertake is to implement this new learning model into the Wednesday night bible study. James will observe what took place in the 9:00a.m. worship service to adjust or change any item that did not work or caused concerns to make sure the Wednesday night bible studies run smoothly. James will also use the 9:00 a.m. worship service participants to serve and help with the bible study group.

The primary expectation is that more people become empowered by the word to educate, become equipped, to take the enthusiasm of learning to evangelize others. I also expect the church's learning community to have a comprehensive concept of the bible; hence, James will divide the groups up into four areas of study.

By utilizing these four groups to study different areas of the bible lessons, the congregation will learn and retain the many aspects of the scriptures. Lastly, the writer expects the bible study to maintain its current attendance or expand in its attendance.

The research methods for this project are as follows:

1. Interview pastors or Christian educators to discover what teaching method they are utilizing for bible studies and Sunday school classes. If they are using the self-directed method, the writer will observe their technique.
2. Perform a test run of the self-directed curriculum with Ammons United Methodist Church morning worship congregation. During this time he will adjust and make changes to the process if necessary.
3. Give the participants a multiple choice pre-test to gauge what the participants may know about the bible studies that we will study. There will be five bible studies. They are as follows: Abraham and Isaac: The Sacrifice; Joseph and his brothers; Rahab and the spies; Jesus is born; and Saul becomes Paul. The participants will be broken into four learning pods. They are as follows: the Historical Group; the Practical Living and the Bible Group; the Fine and Performing Arts Group; and Jesus in the Scripture Group. These groups will teach the class in their own way.
4. Observe the participants during class time. Are they responsive? Are they studying? Is there learning taking place?

5. James will have all classes from the teens to adults combined. James also wants to know if self-directed learning helps people in various learning stages and education levels.
6. Give the same pre-test asking the participants the same questions as the first pre-test to see if they respond with more correct answers than the first pre-test.
7. After the five bible studies, randomly ask the participants questions and get their feedback on the bible studies. The writer will interview the participants and then have a focus group session with the participants. Afterwards, James will share the findings with the senior pastor and staff. Make a recommendation to the senior pastor and staff that self-directed learning be implemented in Wednesday night bible study and the church's Sunday school curriculum.

The writer believes the self-directed learning curriculum will be well received and useful in the 9:00 a.m. worship service. For the most part, the congregation of Ammons is open to change. The bible study group may take a longer period of time to adjust to the changes. As the writer mentioned earlier, Ammons, like many churches have used the teacher led method for years. However, it is the writer's belief that once the congregation adjusts to the changes, they will become more confident in using the self-directed learning method. The writer plans to see immediate results.

CHAPTER FIVE

Results of Model

The primary expectation is that through self-directed learning people will become educated, equipped and empowered to evangelize. The writer also expects the church's learning community to have a comprehensive concept of the bible; hence, the writer divided the participants into four areas of study. The groups are as follows: historical, practical application, prophetic and performing/fine arts. By utilizing these four groups to study different bible lessons, it is the writer's belief that the congregation will learn and retain the many aspects of scripture. Lastly, the writer expects the bible study to maintain its current attendance or increase in attendance.

The writer was interested to know if any other congregations were currently utilizing a self-directed learning curriculum. The writer interviewed three pastors in the Cincinnati Metropolitan region. The writer interviewed Erwin McIntosh, pastor of the fifty member Quinn Chapel A.M.E. Church; Robert Harper, pastor of the two-hundred and fifty member First Baptist Church of Kennedy Heights; and Dr. Michael Dantley, pastor of the five thousand member Christ Emmanuel Church.

After interviewing these three pastors, the writer found that none of these churches are currently using a self-directed learning curriculum.

The writer asked the pastors would they be willing to use this type of curriculum, the pastors told the writer they would entertain the options of using self-directed learning.

This study was done over a period of five weeks and the participants ages ranged from twenty-two to fifty-eight. Before the first lesson, Abraham and Isaac, a pre-test was given to the participants. After the pre-test, the writer would gather participant feedback concerning the pre-test. See example in Appendix A. The writer would then offer the participants suggestions on how to research the materials presented in the pre-test. The writer suggested the participants use the internet, public libraries and purchase items from the bible book store.

The following week the participants shared his or her research findings with the group by teaching the subject he or she selected. After the participants taught the lesson, the post-test would be administered. See example in Appendix B. All of the participants are low-income and are women. Three of the participants are high school graduates, but one the participants did not complete high school. After the five week bible study, the writer organized a focus group to talk about the lesson and the self-directed learning process. Afterward, the writer conducted individual interviews with the participants. During the focus groups and the individual interviews, the writer asked the participants what affect did this process have on them?

On Sunday, December 17th, 2006, an announcement was made to the congregation at the nine o'clock worship service concerning a new learning concept. The writer shared with the congregation the plans to have an in-depth bible study during the early morning service in which they, the participants, would teach the class. The writer then simply explained the concept of self-directed learning and how it would be applied.

Afterwards, the writer allowed those interested to find a subject out of the four listed. Interesting enough, four people volunteered to participate in this project. This gave each participant a subject to focus on for the bible studies that were going to take place.

The writer simply explained that in this self-directed learning curriculum the participants would be responsible for their learning by researching and teaching their subject matter. The writer also explained the importance of accurate and useful research because the participants would be seen as experts in the particular topic assigned to them. The writer informed the participants that he would be available to answer any questions that may arise. Knowing that many of the participants had limited knowledge about intensive research, the writer shared information on where to find materials to assist them in the research effort. A basic guideline for subject items that should be covered in the teaching component for all participants was covered in the initial meeting.

The writer was simplistic in the directions for the participants. He wanted to see what direction the group would take. Also, it is the writer's belief that too many directives would overwhelm the participants.

On January 7th, 2007, a pre-test on Abraham and Isaac was administered. See example in Appendix A. The writer observed the participants being extremely nervous. Some of the participants had test anxiety and just gave the writer a blank stare before starting the test. The writer assured the participants they had nothing to fear and told the participants to do their best in taking the test. The writer was interested to find out what the participants already knew about the particular bible lesson. Most of the participants finished the pre-test in less than ten minutes.

The pre-test consisted of multiple choice questions, true and false questions, and essay questions. When all of the participants completed the pre-test, the writer asked the participants their feelings about the test. Many of the participants said they did not know many of the answers and did not feel good about the test.

The writer observed many of the essay questions were not answered or contained fewer than three lines written. In addition, many of the multiple choice questions were left blank. After the pre-test, the writer announced to the participants that Abraham and Isaac would be the subject they would have to research and teach. The writer explained to each participant that they would need to cover basic items when teaching her particular subject. For example, the person researching history would have to tell the group the main characters in the story. The participant would have to disclose the location of the event and the culture of the people. The writer did not want to overload the participants with too many details, but made suggestions on how each participant could educate the total group. The writer followed the same guidelines for practical living, prophetic, and fine/performing arts subject participants. The writer wanted to make sure he was not doing all the brainstorming and leg work for the participants.

The writer wanted to make sure the participants were doing the research on their own; however, the writer was available for guidance and support. Some participants called the writer at the beginning of the research project. The writer would ask the participants questions that would lead to the answer the participants needed. The writer would remind the participants of the importance of research and reminded the participants they were the subject experts for their particular cell group.

The writer would ask the participants to place themselves in the place of the people they were teaching when designing their lessons. In most cases, this type of guidance and instructions helped the participants forge ahead with their research and lessons plans.

Results of the Model

On Sunday, January 14th, 2007, the writer noticed the participants were on time for the nine o'clock morning service. Praise and worship service started promptly and afterwards the group went into prayer. After prayer, the writer called the participant who was responsible for researching and teaching the history subject area. Each person researched her own topic. The participants would not know how the other was going to present or teach their portion of the class. At the onset of our project, many of the participants had limited knowledge of some stories selected.

The writer strongly believes this was a positive scenario because the research was crucial to the success of the participants. For example, the prophetic participant carefully pointed out how Isaac was a preview of what Christ would do for mankind at the cross.

The prophetic participant illustrated how Abraham took Isaac up to be sacrificed on the third day and how Isaac did not fight his father, but willing went to the place of the sacrifice. She emphasized that Isaac was Abraham's only son from Sarah.

Also, the prophetic participant explained to the group that Abraham told the men that were journeying along with him that he and Isaac would return. The participant told the group that Abraham knew God would provide. The history participant informed the group that Isaac was to be sacrificed at Mt. Mariah. She told the group that God intervened before the sacrifice because people could not be physically burned and sacrificed to God. The history participant told the group only Jesus could be the perfect sacrifice. God would only accept Jesus.

The practical living participant told the group that one must be obedient unto God even when one has to give up something dear. She told the group that God always have a ram in the bush for all situations and circumstances. The practical living participant shared with the class that sacrifice will lead to reward. The performing/fine art participant sang "I Surrender All" to neatly join the topic and the music together.

The performing/fine art participant told the group that in order to become a living sacrifice, there must be surrender. Afterwards, the facilitator congratulated all the participants. He told them to research more and pay close attention to detail. The facilitator admonished the group to research scriptures that were related to one another. The facilitator reminded the group to remember what they had read on the pre-test. Soon after the lecture, the facilitator administered the post-test. See example in Appendix B. The participants seemed more eager to take the test.

The researcher noticed the participants were not as nervous as they were before during the pre-test. The group performed slight higher on the post-test than the pre-test.

The research also observed that the essay questions were answered more in-depth that the previous test. After the post-test for Abraham and Isaac, the participants were given a pre-test for our study of Rahab. See example in Appendix C.

Just as the pre-test for Abraham was disappointing, so was the pre-test for Rahab. None of the participants had ever heard of Rahab. They heard about the wall of Jericho because of the popular spiritual; however, they did not know the story of Rahab and her importance to the wall of Jericho.

After the pre-test, the researcher asked the participants their thoughts. Many of the participants expressed frustration because they did not know the answers. Many of the participants told me they guessed many answers. Once again, the essay questions were not answered or either had one sentence.

The facilitator told the group the next lesson would be about Rahab. The researcher reminded the participants to pay close attention to what was asked on the pre-test. The researcher suggested that the participants use cross references and bible commentaries, concordances and the internet to aid them in research. The facilitator also suggested the participants read books by people who wrote about Rahab. Unlike the last session, this time no one called the facilitator for assistance. The researcher was somewhat concerned about this occurrence, but he wanted to see what results would take place.

On January 21st, 2007, the participants were at the sanctuary earlier than the scheduled time. Many of them were praying at the altar. The researcher noticed that many of the participants brought family members. This was part of the "Four E" strategy. Educating the people will equip the people and empower them to evangelize.

It is the writer's belief that after the first lesson, the participants felt educated enough and had enough training in the word to feel empowered to evangelize their families so they would join them in worship services.

After praise and worship services concluded, the researcher began class starting with the history participant. It is the writer's belief that the information the history participant share will lay the foundation for the other areas of study.

The history participant pointed out that Rahab was a prostitute; however, she explained to the group that in Canaanite culture a prostitutes were usually priestesses in the temples; therefore, it was seen as acceptable.

The historic participant explained that Rahab may have been around forty to forty-seven years old because the bible said she remembered people talking about how God open the sea for the Hebrews. She told the group that it took the children of Israel forty years to make it out of the wilderness and fight other battles and clans before they came to Jericho. The history participant explained to the group that Rahab married one of the spies, but emphasized that Rahab was not a Jew, but instead a Canaanite. The history participant made the point to the group that God was already making plans for the Gentiles even in the Old Testament. She also shared with the group that Ruth was not a Hebrew, but a Moabite. The observer was impressed and stunned at the depth the participant had displayed in such a short period of time.

Because of the time constraints, the facilitator was not able to allow the group to ask the history participant questions; however, this will be implemented in future research.

The participant covering the area of practical application was excited. She told the group that they could not and should not reject people because of their past or present state. The life application participant told the group that people who look least likely to help us are usually or greatest allies. She also focused on Rahab's unselfish nature to save her friends and family.

The prophetic participant was very brief, but her research and observation was eye opening. She stated the red cord Rahab was instructed to place outside her window so destruction would not come upon her and all in the house is significant in many ways. The prophetic participant explained that the red cord was symbolic of Passover. She reminded us that the red blood of an unblemished lamb was to be placed over the door post and the angel of death would pass.

Then she told us that Jesus' blood covers us when we accept him. She told the group that the blood of Jesus is our covering. The prophetic participant tied all of this in to Rahab and the red cord. She told the class everyone who was in the house was saved. The prophetic participant then told the group this was somewhat like a Gentile Passover. Afterwards, the performing/fine arts participant danced to "Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho." It is the observer's opinion that learning took place. The researcher observed people who had no prior knowledge of this bible study suddenly become proficient and confident to teach others about this topic.

When all of the participants had a chance to share their knowledge, the researcher administered the post-test for Rahab and the Spies. See example in Appendix D. This time the participants seemed more confident and eager to take the post-test. After the test, the researcher noticed a slight increase in correct answers.

With the knowledge displayed in the group setting, the researcher expected more than just a slight increase in multiple choice answers; however, there was a drastic increase in the length of the essay answers. The participants wrote more and in greater detail.

The researcher strongly believes that the increase in correct answers and the detailed, expanded writing in the area of essay questions were in direct correlation with the self-directed learning curriculum taught. The researcher was pleasantly surprised with the depth and the commitment the participants were taking the bible lessons. The researcher continued to give praise and positive feedback. The participants seemed so eager to learn. Afterwards, the researcher asked each of them what they had learned.

All of the participants told me they were more confident to share their knowledge. The researcher observed them becoming more open and vocal in class. They began to participate and help in the morning service. This was a far cry from just two-weeks ago. After the Rahab post-test, the researcher administered the pre-test for Jesus is born. See example in Appendix E. Since this was a familiar subject, the participants were not as nervous as with other lessons. The researcher noticed all of the answers were completed on this test. He also noticed the essay questions were answered in greater detailed than in the past. After the participants completed the pre-test, they told the research they had an ideal of the lesson for next week. The writer believes groups learn when there are consistent patterns to follow.

On January 28th, 2007, the group met for another bible lesson: *Jesus is Born*. The researcher told the group to expand their knowledge on this lesson because they were familiar with the story.

The history participant explained to the group that the poor, lowly shepherds were the first to see Jesus and the first to tell about his coming. Next the participant pointed out that Jesus may have been around two years old when the wise men arrived.

She explained to the group when Herod found out the wise men had come and gone, he started to kill all male children two years old and under.

She told the class that Jesus was in a house and not a manger when the "magi" arrived. The history participant told us the wise men brought three gifts, but the word did not tell us how many wise men actually traveled to see Jesus.

The history participant told the class the men had to travel long distances to get to Jesus. She explained to us that the men had no cars or motorcycles; they took a camel or just walked. She told the group that Joseph had to hear from God because Mary being pregnant and not yet married to Joseph was a disgrace and Mary could have been stoned.

The prophetic participant went back to Isaiah and tied the Old Testament scriptures with the New Testament scriptures concerning Jesus. The practical life application participant shared with the group that everyone knew of Jesus' coming except Herod. She asked the group were they too like Herod. She asked them were they missing the move of God. Afterwards, she expounded upon the wise men going another way. The practical life application participant told the group that they are to follow God and go another way. She explained to the group by going another way, a life may be saved. She talked about the wise men obedience and also Herod's insincere motives to get information about Jesus.

She told us that everyone who wants information about us may not be for us. The practical life application participant spoke on Jesus using the poor to spread the word and how a major Christian movement involved the poor. Her main theme was obedience.

The performing/fine arts participant danced to *Now Behold the Lamb.* She used this piece to show the group that Jesus was born and had a purpose for coming to the earth. The researcher observed after each lesson the participants grasped new knowledge and spoke as experts. The post-test scores were greatly improved in all areas.

In the past there were only slight improvements involving the multiple choice questions and vast increases in the essay questions, but this time there were increases in all test sectors. After the lesson, the researcher administered the pre-test for *Joseph and his Brothers*. See example in Appendix G. The researcher noticed that many of the participants were not familiar with this story. They were still confident in answering the questions; however, after the pre-test it was obvious the group did not know the details of this story.

Because the group was conditioned to studying after the pre-test, they were aware they would have to teach this very topic. As is all cases, the researcher did not give the participants the chapter, the verses or the book of the bible to study. This was the participant's job to find the books and the verses of the bible the group was studying in any particular week. The researcher was interested to see what would result next group meeting.

On February 11th, 2007, the group started bible study with praise and worship. All the participants were present. All the participants present continued to bring visitors with them.

The history participant gave the group some background about Joseph and his father Jacob. She noted that the Ishmaelite and the Midianites may have been offspring of Hagar and Abraham's wife after Sarah for the Midianites.

She explained to the group that Potiphar may not have believed his wife fully because he did not have Joseph killed, but rather places in jail. The history participant also informed the group that Joseph married Pharaoh's priest daughter who was Egyptian and not Hebrew. She also mentioned that Ephraim and Manasseh came from this union and became part of the tribe of Israel.

The practical life application participant explained to the group that God knows the best time to elevate the people of God. She also told the group that they should be careful how they treat others because no one can predict who will help them in a time of need. The prophetic participant told the group how Joseph was rejected by his own family members, but thrived and accepted among people who were strangers. She compared this to Jesus being rejected by the Jews, but received by the Gentiles. Like Jesus, she told the group, Joseph knew his purpose for suffering.

The prophetic participant told the group that Joseph went through his suffering to save the people that rejected him. The performing/fine arts participant sang *Jesus Can Work it Out.* The performing arts participant told the group she chose this selection because out of all the tribulations Joseph went through, God work it out for him. After the lesson, the participants received the post-test.

See example in Appendix H. Once again the researcher noticed the participants did only slightly better in answering the multiple choice questions, but made drastic improvements in the area of essay questions.

After the post-test for *Joseph and his Brothers,* the researcher administered the pre-test for *Saul becomes Paul.* See example in Appendix I.

After the pre-test was completed, the researcher asked the participants their feelings about the test. Many told the researcher they had heard a few things about the story of Saul's conversion, but they did not know enough to tell someone about it in detail. The researcher remembered that *Jesus is Born* was the only bible story all of the participants had knowledge of and tested well.

On February 18th, 2007, the group began their last bible study and they were more than happy to share their findings. The history participant shared with the group that Saul was a Pharisee and was from Tarsus and a Roman citizen. She told the group Saul studied under Gamaliel, a famous rabbi. She noted that God did not change Saul's name to Paul, but rather Saul was the Hebrew version of Paul. The history participant told the group she believed he made the name change because he ministered to many Gentiles. She also mentioned that Saul fell to the ground and was not knocked off of a beast. She told the group that Paul was very educated, unlike many people of that era.

The practical life application participant told the group that God can change people and Christians should not reject people for who they were, but accept them for who they are and will become. She also told the group that even though Paul was educated in Jewish traditions and culture, when he accepted God's call, he had to be re-taught and did not preach until he was trained from the disciples in Damascus.

The prophetic participant was mentioned Gamaliel in her teaching like the history participant. The prophetic participant told the group that Gamaliel gave the counsel advice about how to handle the Christians.

She mentioned that Paul had to hear this advice because Gamaliel was his teacher. She pointed out that if ministries are of God, the person could be fighting against God. She told the group that God asked Saul why he was persecuting God. She told the class Gamaliel had spoken this before Saul conversion.

The performing arts participant was not present during our group session. After the lesson was completed, the post-test was administered. See example in Appendix J. The participants once again performed slightly better on the multiple choice questions, but excelled on the essay portion of the post-test. After the participants completed the test, the researcher asked the participants how this process has affected you. Many of the participants told the researcher they read the bible with a purpose because they have a system in place. All the participants present felt they could present a lesson in front of a group and teach them. The participants present told the researcher they understood the bible better with the process provided for the five-week period.

The researcher observed the participants for five Sundays during a two hour period. These are a few notable observations.

1. The participants began bringing paper and pens to the bible studies to take notes from others that were teaching
2. Within the five week time frame of the bible church services, twenty-five visitors attended the services.
3. Time was not a major factor for the participants. The participants were staying in the services longer. The researcher had to close the services.

The researcher conducted individual interviews. He asked the participants what changes have this process made in your life. The prophetic participant told the researcher she felt more confident and told the researcher that she has enrolled in college. After a few months passed, she told the researcher she passed all of her classes because she implemented what she learned in the bible church services to her college classes.

The history participant told the researcher that she now uses the library more often because she enjoys getting a different perspective on what she is reading. The performing/fine arts participant told the researcher she is now enrolled in a general education diploma program. The practical life application participant told the researcher this process has caused her to examine herself and evangelize her family and her neighborhood.

It is the researcher's belief that because of the self-directed learning curriculum instituted at Ammon's United Methodist Church, the members were educated and through this process they were equipped, which is evident because the students taught others in the group. Many participants in the group told the researcher they felt they had power (empowered) and because the group brought in twenty-five visitors within a five-week period, the researcher saw the people being evangelized.

CHAPTER SIX

Summary

The writer strongly believed that when self-directed learning became an instrument in Ammon's United Methodist Church's morning service, the participants would become educated, equipped, and empowered to evangelize others. The writer believed the participant's knowledge of the bible would increase in this process. The writer had hoped the project would confirm his beliefs in the strength of self-directed learning, but the writer did not expect the changes to happen so rapidly. Nevertheless, the writer was satisfied with the results and findings.

The participants became educated and familiar with some stories of the bible that had not been studied by any of them. The writer observed a group of people who had little knowledge about certain passages of the bible apply the self-directed learning curriculum and thrive in just a period of a week. The writer observed a group of people who began to gain the confidence to teach other through this process. Since each individual had a topic or and area of expertise, the participants learned on their own and in a group when all the topics were discussed; thus, making the participants learning comprehensive. After the participants studied, they had knowledge and became equipped to teach others.

As noted earlier, the participants began to bring equipment in the form of note pads and pens. The participants expressed to the writer how much confidence they had gained and how helpful it was to use this tool in their study. Many of the participants now seek the historic, prophetic, practical and performing/fine arts value in all the scriptures studied. All the participants the writer interviewed felt empowered. The writer could see a change in how the participants expressed themselves concerning biblical and practical living situations.

When conversing about daily life, the participants would refer to one of the bible studies the group had completed. The participants evangelized to friends and families members. In a five-week period, twenty-five visitors came to Ammon's United Methodist Church. Five participants were responsible for this increase. The participants were very enthusiastic about the project because the writer was excited about the project. At first, the participants were nervous because many of them did not know some bible passages and stories; however, when the participants grasped the concept, the anxiety dissipated. The writer kept the format and the concept of the lessons very simple. However, the pre-test could have consisted of essay questions. The writer really gleaned the progress of the participants from the essay questions. Also, the time could have been extended from an hour to a half an hour. This would have allowed time for the participants to ask the subject expert questions about the research.

Summary

The participants in the self-directed learning bible church service have grown from unsure, anxious bible students to confident and productive subject experts in our morning service. This process has been a joy for the writer. Through this process, one of the participants is pursuing her G.E.D. and yet another participant is pursuing her college education. This process had brought about a transformation.

Not only did the participants learn, they shared their knowledge with others. The participants learned how important they are to the body of Christ and they developed skills that enabled them to study in a group setting or study in solitude. Many of the participants discovered their roles in the church during this process. The writer was blessed by the depth of teaching given from the participants. It was truly a humbling experience.

Other Learning that Occurred

During this process, the writer observed that all of the subject leaders depended on each other. All subject areas were important. One of the participants could not make it to a lesson and the study could not continue because she held vital information that completed the learning cycle. The participant then made it a point to be at all the church bible study functions. The facilitator had to have knowledge of what the participant's projects consisted of. The facilitator had to be aware of the participant's progress. The facilitator was responsible for setting the tone of the group and was responsible for the topics and lessons of the participants. The facilitator had to be the subject expert in all areas. This meant the facilitator had to study the lesson and grasp certain concepts before the group started to study the material. Also, the writer observed when the participants had to teach, they invited guest to share in the learning experience as well. The participants provided the church a service by promoting what God was doing through them at their local assembly.

An important part of the program success was the participants had to attend church services to know what the next lesson would entail. This brought about steady consistent attendance. Finally, the writer believes that this study could be expanded to any church where leadership is open to change. This study transcends race, church size and economic status. As long as the individual has basic reading skills, this project is a viable option. As for now, the writer plans to target churches in the Southwest Ohio region to implement this curriculum. However, in the future, the writer plans to conduct seminars that will help pastors connect with his or her Christian Education department through self-directed learning. The writer is committed to exploring further research opportunities in the area of self-directed learning in the church.

APPENDIX A

PRE-TEST

PRE-TEST

01/07/07

Abraham and Isaac

Doctor of Ministry Project

United Theological Seminary

Name_____

Sex: M/F

Age_____

1. Please write about your knowledge of the story of Abraham and Isaac.

2. Which answer gives the **best** description of Abraham in this story?
   a. The Father of Many Nations.
   b. Abraham is obedient and faithful.
   c. Abraham is blessed.
   d. Abraham sacrificed an animal.

3. Which answer gives the **best** description of Isaac in this story?
   a. Isaac is a friend of Abraham.
   b. Isaac is the son of Sarah.
   c. Isaac is the son of Abraham.
   d. Isaac built an altar for a sacrifice.

4. Which mountain was used for the sacrifice?
    a. Mt. Nebo
    b. Mt. Olive
    c. Mt. Carmel
    d. Mt.Moriah

5. Which event is **not** true of the events that occurred before the sacrifice?
    a. Abraham talked to the men about the sacrifice.
    b. He made Isaac carry the wood.
    c. Abraham built an altar.
    d. Abraham cut the wood for the sacrifice.

6. Abraham had other sons:
    a. True
    b. False

7. On what day did Abraham see the site for the sacrifice?
    a. It was the second day.
    b. It was the third day.
    c. It was the first day.
    d. It was the forth day.

8. What did Abraham find in the bushes?
    a. Lamb
    b. Bear
    c. Ram
    d. Pig

9. After the burnt offering, what did the angel tell Abraham?
    a. "Do not lay your hands on the child, or do anything to him."
    b. "God will provide."
    c. "In your seed all nations of the earth shall be blessed."
    d. "On this rock I will build my church."

10. Name three or more occurrences that are symbolic to Jesus in this story.

11. What did Abraham say to the men before he took Isaac up into the mountains?
    a. "Pray that the child and I will come back."
    b. "The child and I will go yonder and worship. Pray that we come back."
    c. "The child and I will go yonder and worship and we will comeback to you."
    d. "God will provide."

12. The altar was already built for the sacrifice?
    a. True
    b. False

APPENDIX B

POST TEST

POST TEST

01/14/07

Abraham and Isaac

Doctor of Ministry Project

United Theological Seminary

Name_____

Sex: M/F

Age_____

1. Please write about your knowledge of the story of Abraham and Isaac.

2. Which answer gives the **best** description of Abraham in this story?
    a. The Father of Many Nations.
    b. Abraham is obedient and faithful.
    c. Abraham is blessed.
    d. Abraham sacrificed an animal.

3. Which answer gives the **best** description of Isaac in this story?
    a. Isaac is a friend of Abraham.
    b. Isaac is the son of Sarah.
    c. Isaac is the son of Abraham.
    d. Isaac built an altar for a sacrifice.

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    b. Mt. Olive
    c. Mt. Carmel
    d. Mt.Moriah

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    a. Abraham talked to the men about the sacrifice.
    b. He made Isaac carry the wood.
    c. Abraham built an altar.
    d. Abraham cut the wood for the sacrifice.

6. Abraham had other sons.
    a. True
    b. False

7. On what day did Abraham see the site for the sacrifice?
    a. It was the second day.
    b. It was the third day.
    c. It was the first day.
    d. It was the forth day.

8. What did Abraham find in the bushes?
    a. Lamb
    b. Bear
    c. Ram
    d. Pig

9. After the burnt offering, what did the angel tell Abraham?
    a. "Do not lay your hands on the child, or do anything to him."
    b. "God will provide."
    c. "In your seed all nations of the earth shall be blessed."
    d. "On this rock I will build my church."

10. Name three or more occurrences that are symbolic to Jesus in this story.

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    a. "Pray that the child and I will come back."
    b. "The child and I will go yonder and worship. Pray that we come back."
    c. "The child and I will go yonder and worship and we will comeback to you."
    d. "God will provide."

12. The altar was already built for the sacrifice?
    a. True
    b. False

APPENDIX C

PRE-TEST

PRE- TEST

01/14/07

Rahab and the Spies

Doctor of Ministry Project

United Theological Seminary

Name_____

Sex: M/F

Age_____

1. Please write about your knowledge of the story of Rahab and the spies in the Old Testament.

2. Who sent the spies to Jericho?
    a. Moses
    b. Joshua
    c. Joseph
    d. Deborah

3. Rahab was a prostitute?
    a. True
    b. False

4. Where did Rahab hide the spies?
    a. Closet
    b. Bathroom
    c. Roof
    d. Basement

5. Rahab knew why the spies came to Jericho?
    a. True
    b. False

6. What did the spies instruct Rahab to put in her window?
    a. Red Cord
    b. Blue towels
    c. White linen
    d. Leather Belt

7. During the time of the spies' arrival, people came in and out of Jericho as they pleased?
    a. True
    b. False

8. How many times were the people to march around Jericho?
    a. 2
    b. 7
    c. 4
    d. 12

9. Rahab was saved when the walls of Jericho came down.
    a. True
    b. False

10. What happen to the walls of Jericho?
    a. They stayed in place
    b. They fell
    c. It is standing now
    d. None of the above

11. What was the theme in Joshua 4th chapter?
    a. God was with Joseph
    b. You are going to make it
    c. The Lord was with the spies
    d. The Lord has given the land into our hands

12. Name three or more events in this story we could apply to our lives today.

APPENDIX D

POST TEST

POST- TEST

01/21/07

Rahab and the Spies

Doctor of Ministry Project

United Theological Seminary

Name_____

Sex: M/F

Age_____

1. Please write about your knowledge of the story of Rahab and the spies in the Old Testament.

2. Who sent the spies to Jericho?
   a. Moses
   b. Joshua
   c. Joseph
   d. Deborah

3. Rahab was a prostitute?
   a. True
   b. False

4. Where did Rahab hide the spies?
   a. Closet
   b. Bathroom
   c. Roof
   d. Basement

5. Rahab knew why the spies came to Jericho?
   a. True
   b. False

6. What did the spies instruct Rahab to put in her window?
   a. Red Cord
   b. Blue Towel
   c. White linen
   d. Leather belt

7. During the time of the spies' arrival, people came in and out of Jericho as they pleased?
   a. True
   b. False

8. How many times were the people to march around Jericho?
   a. 2
   b. 7
   c. 4
   d. 12

9. Rahab was saved when the walls of Jericho came down.
   a. True
   b. False

10. What happen to the walls of Jericho?
   a. They stayed in place
   b. They fell
   c. It is standing now.
   d. None of the above.

11. What was the theme in Joshua 4th chapter?
   a. God was with Joseph
   b. You are going to make it
   c. The Lord was wit h the spies
   d. The Lord has given all the land into our hands

12. Name three or more events in this story we could apply to our lives today.

APPENDIX E

PRE-TEST

PRE- TEST

01/21/07

Jesus is Born

Doctor of Ministry Project

United Theological Seminary

Name_____

Sex: M/F

Age_____

1. Please write about your knowledge of the story of Jesus' birth.

2. Where is the birth of Jesus found in the New Testament?
   a. Matthew
   b. Mark
   c. Luke
   d. Both A and C

3. Three wise men came to see Jesus.
   a. True
   b. False

4. Herod knew about the birth of Jesus and wanted to worship him.
   a. True
   b. False

5. Joseph had to go to Bethlehem because of:
   a. The census
   b. Herod's threats
   c. Mary's pregnancy
   d. Financial problems

6. Who were the first, besides Mary and Joseph, to see Jesus?
   a. The wise men.
   b. Herod
   c. The shepherds
   d. The priest

7. Who announced Jesus birth?
   a. The Wise men.
   b. The shepherds
   c. The angels
   d. Jesus

8. Herod killed all of the babies in Bethlehem.
   a. True
   b. False

9. Where did Joseph and Mary escape to for safety?
    a. Syria
    b. Ethiopia
    c. Egypt
    d. None of the above

10. The Wise men told Herod where to find Baby Jesus.
    a. True
    b. False

11. Name three or more events in this story that could apply to our lives today.

APPENDIX F

POST TEST

POST- TEST

01/28/07

Jesus is Born

Doctor of Ministry Project

United Theological Seminary

Name_____

Sex: M/F

Age_____

1. Please write about your knowledge of the story of Jesus' birth.

2. Where is the birth of Jesus found in the New Testament?
   a. Matthew
   b. Mark
   c. Luke
   d. Both A and C

3. Three wise men came to see Jesus.
   a. True
   b. False

4. Herod knew about the birth of Jesus and wanted to worship him.
   a. True
   b. False

5. Joseph had to go to Bethlehem because of:
   a. the census
   b. Herod's threats
   c. Mary's pregnancy
   d. Financial problems

6. Who were the first, besides Mary and Joseph, to see Jesus?
   a. The wise men.
   b. Herod
   c. The shepherds
   d. The priest

7. Who announced Jesus birth?
   a. The Wise men.
   b. The shepherds
   c. The angels
   d. Jesus

8. Herod killed all of the babies in Bethlehem.
   a. True
   b. False

9. Where did Joseph and Mary escape to for safety?
    a. Syria
    b. Ethiopia
    c. Egypt.
    d. None of the above.

10. The Wise men told Herod where to find Baby Jesus.
    a. True
    b. False

. 12. Name three or more events in this story that could apply to our lives today.

APPENDIX G

PRE-TEST

PRE- TEST

01/28/07

Joseph and his Brothers

Doctor of Ministry Project

United Theological Seminary

Name_____

Sex: M/F

Age_____

1. Please write about your knowledge of the story of Joseph in the Old Testament.

2. Why did Joseph's father love him more than his brothers?
   a. He dreamed dreams
   b. He was the son of his old age
   c. Joseph wore better clothes than his brothers
   d. His birth was a miracle

3. What did Joseph's father give him?
   a. A tunic of many colors
   b. A plot of land to plow
   c. New sandals
   d. Control over the flock of sheep

4. What was the name of Joseph's father?
   a. Jacob
   b. Esau
   c. Israel
   d. Both a and c

5. Joseph's brothers loved him and spoke kindly of him.
   a. True
   b. False

6. Joseph's father was happy to hear about his dreams.
   a. True
   b. False

7. Which brother did not allow Joseph to be killed?
   a. Judah
   b. Simeon
   c. Reuben
   d. Levi

8. Who did the brothers sell Joseph to?
   a. The Canaanites
   b. The Edomites
   c. The Egyptians
   d. The Ishmaelites

9. Potiphar was an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard?
   a. True
   b. False

10. Which group sold Joseph to Potiphar?
   a. The Canaanites
   b. The Edomites
   c. The Midianites
   d. The Ishmaelites

11. Which phrase is common during Joseph's journey?
   a. God was with Joseph
   b. Joseph was faithful
   c. The Lord was with Joseph
   d. God provided for Joseph

12. Joseph was thrown into jail because he made advances at Potiphar's wife.
   a. True
   b. False

13. Name three or more events in this story that could apply to our lives today.

14. Who told Pharaoh about Joseph's ability to interpret dreams?
   a. The butler
   b. The baker
   c. The priest
   d. The prison guard

15. Did Joseph's dreams come true? If your answer is yes, please explain. If your answer is no, please explain.

APPENDIX H

POST TEST

POST-TEST

02/11/07

Joseph and his Brothers

Doctor of Ministry Project

United Theological Seminary

Name_____

Sex: M/F

Age_____

1. Please write about your knowledge of the story of Joseph in the Old Testament.

2. Why did Joseph's father love him more than his brothers?
   a. He dreamed dreams
   b. He was the son of his old age
   c. Joseph wore better clothes than his brothers
   d. His birth was a miracle

3. What did Joseph's father give him?
   a. A tunic of many colors
   b. A plot of land to plow
   c. New sandals
   d. Control over the flock of sheep

4. What was the name of Joseph's father?
   a. Jacob
   b. Esau
   c. Israel
   d. Both a and c

5. Joseph's brothers loved him and spoke kindly of him.
   a. True
   b. False

6. Joseph's father was happy to hear about his dreams.
   a. True
   b. False

7. Which brother did not allow Joseph to be killed?
   a. Judah
   b. Simeon
   c. Reuben
   d. Levi

8. Who did the brothers sell Joseph to?
   a. The Canaanites
   b. The Edomites
   c. The Egyptians
   d. The Ishmaelites

9. Potiphar was an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard?
   a. True
   b. False

10. Which group sold Joseph to Potiphar?
   a. The Canaanites
   b. The Edomites
   c. The Midianites
   d. The Ishmaelites

11. Which phrase is common during Joseph's journey?
   a. God was with Joseph
   b. Joseph was faithful
   c. The Lord was with Joseph
   d. God provided for Joseph

12. Joseph was thrown into jail because he made advances at Potiphar's wife.
   a. True
   b. False

13. Name three or more events in this story that could apply to our lives today.

14. Who told Pharaoh about Joseph's ability to interpret dreams?
   a. The butler
   b. The baker
   c. The priest
   d. The prison guard

15. Did Joseph's dreams come true? If your answer is yes, please explain. If your answer is no, please explain.

APPENDIX I

PRE-TEST

PRE- TEST

02/11/07

Saul/Paul

Doctor of Ministry Project

United Theological Seminary

Name_____

Sex: M/F

Age_____

1. Please write about your knowledge of the conversion of Saul/Paul.

2. What was Saul known for?
    a. Defending the church of Jesus Christ
    b. Being a nice man
    c. Persecuting the church of Jesus Christ
    d. Building churches

3. Saul was a witness in which person's death?
    a. Phillip
    b. Isaac
    c. Peter
    d. Stephen

4. Who gave Saul permission to arrest people who preached and believed in Jesus?
    a. The High Priest
    b. The Pharisees
    c. The Sadducees
    d. The Scribes

5. Saul was knocked off of his donkey by a strong light from Heaven?
    a. True
    b. False

6. Who was Gamaliel?
    a. A teacher of law
    b. Saul's mentor and instructor
    c. A tax collector
    d. Both a and b

7. After Saul fell to the ground, what did the voice say?
    a. "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting my people?"
    b. "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"
    c. "Saul, Saul, I am the Lord thy God."
    d. "Upon this rock I will build my church."

8. When Saul asked," Who are you Lord? The voice said:
    a. "I am God."
    b. "I am the Way, The Truth and The Light."
    c. "I am Jesus."
    d. "I am the Lord."

9. Which answer is **not** true about Paul?
    a. He is a Roman citizen
    b. He is a Scribe
    c. He is a Pharisee
    d. He is Jewish

10. Name three or more things in this story that may apply to our lives today.

11. Jesus changed Saul's name to Paul.
    a. True
    b. False

12. The men who traveled with Saul ran away screaming in fear after seeing what happened.
    a. True
    b. False

13. God told Saul to go into Damascus and seek Ananias. In a vision, God told Ananias that Saul would be seeking his assistance. Ananias was pleased about helping Saul?
    a. True
    b. False

14. After Ananias prayed for Paul, his sight returned and Paul began to:
    a. Immediately preach the gospel
    b. Kill the Jews
    c. Build a church complex
    d. Learn from the disciples in Damascus and preach Jesus in the Synagogues

APPENDIX J

POST TEST

POST TEST

02/18/07

Saul/Paul

Doctor of Ministry Project

United Theological Seminary

Name_____

Sex: M/F

Age_____

1. Please write about your knowledge of the conversion of Saul/Paul.

2. What was Saul known for?
    a. Defending the church of Jesus Christ
    b. Being a nice man
    c. Persecuting the church of Jesus Christ
    d. Building churches

3. Saul was a witness in which person's death?
    a. Phillip
    b. Isaac
    c. Peter
    d. Stephen

4. Who gave Saul permission to arrest people who preached and believed in Jesus?
    a. The High Priest
    b. The Pharisees
    c. The Sadducees
    d. The Scribes

5. Saul was knocked off of his donkey by a strong light from Heaven?
    a. True
    b. False

7. Who was Gamaliel?
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    c. A tax collector
    d. Both a and b

8. After Saul fell to the ground, what did the voice say?
    a. "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting my people?"
    b. "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"
    c. "Saul, Saul, I am the Lord thy God."
    d. "Upon this rock I will build my church."

9. When Saul asked," Who are you Lord? The voice said:
    a. "I am God."
    b. "I am the Way, The Truth and The Light."
    c. "I am Jesus."
    d. "I am the Lord."

10. Which answer is **not** true about Paul?
    a. He is a Roman citizen
    b. He is a Scribe
    c. He is a Pharisee
    d. He is Jewish

11. Name three or more things in this story that may apply to our lives today.

12. Jesus changed Saul's name to Paul.
    a. True
    b. False

13. The men who traveled with Saul ran away screaming in fear after seeing what happened.
    a. True
    b. False

14. God told Saul to go into Damascus and seek Ananias. In a vision, God told Ananias that Saul would be seeking his assistance. Ananias was pleased about helping Saul?
    a. True
    b. False

15. After Ananias prayed for Paul, his sight returned and Paul began to:
    a. Immediately preach the gospel
    b. Kill the Jews
    c. Build a church complex
    d. Learn from the disciples in Damascus and preach Jesus in the Synagogues

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